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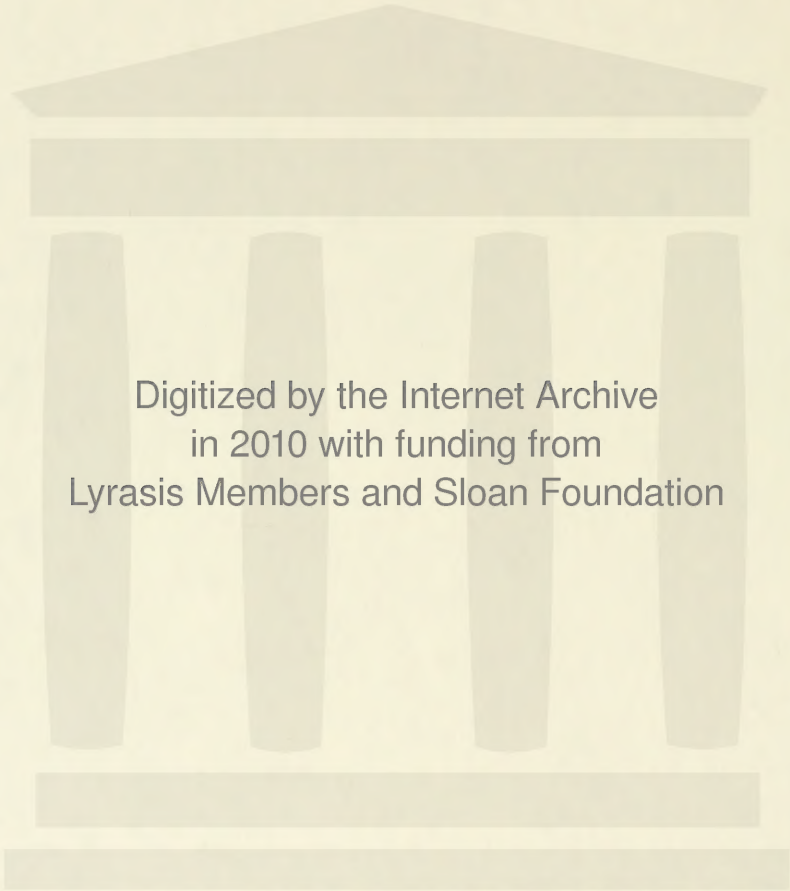

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"Not Quite What I had in Mind"

The Defeat of Characters' Expectations In Modern Drama

S. D. Boylston

A Thesis
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Honours Degree In English
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To Mr. Aiken

With Many Thanks

To Mr. Aiken

With Many Thanks

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Preface

The quotation from the title page--"Not quite what I had in mind"--is spoken by the Billsticker on page 209 of August Strindberg's A Dream Play, trans. Elisabeth Sprigge (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1955).

This same comment was often spoken by the author during the composition and correction of this thesis. No further comment.

Introduction

> The Devil: ...men get tired of everything, of Heaven no less than of Hell; and... all history is but a record of the oscillations of the world between these two extremes.... But when you are as old as I am...you will no longer imagine that every swing from Heaven to Hell is an emancipation, every swing from Hell to Heaven an evolution. Where you now see reform, progress, fulfillment of upward tendency...you will see nothing but an infinite comedy of illusion...
>
> *
>
> ...You think, because you have a purpose, Nature must have one. You might as well expect it to have fingers and toes because you have them.
>
> Don Juan: But I should not have them if they served no purpose. And I, my friend, am as much a part of Nature as my own finger is part of me. If my finger is the organ by which I grasp the sword...my brain is the organ by which Nature strives to understand itself....my brain labours at a knowledge which does nothing personally but make my body bitter to me and my decay and death a calamity. Were I not possessed with a purpose beyond my own, I had better be a ploughman than a philosopher...
>
> [Man and Superman, p. 169]

The issues that Shaw raises in this humourous confrontation between Don Juan and the Devil are important ones in modern drama, for the practicality of action, self-knowledge, and understanding of others is important to all the plays of this period. Shaw's distinctions between progress and irrevocability are seen in different guises in different plays, and although his ideas cannot be imposed on the plays of other playwrights' work, it is useful to use his arguments as a basis for the analysis of the ways in which man struggles with life. Don Juan and the devil discuss the terms of purpose and desire, the philosophies of characters eager to impose their understanding of the world on others. They argue about the likelihood that men will achieve their desires and contradict one another with their understanding of the practicality of having any expectations about life at all. In essence, they are discussing expectations here, expectations created and sustained by the individual in spite of or in accord with the conditions of the world in which he lives. The Devil counsels Juan against relying too much on ideals and purposes which may be illusory, whereas Juan asserts that purposes belie self-knowledge; deception, in his case, counteracts illusion and compensates for it. Thus we see

Introduction

> The Devil: ...Man, perverted in everything, of Heaven no less than of Hell, and... all history is but a record of the oscillations of the world between these two extremes.... But when you are as old as I am...you will no longer imagine that every swing from Heaven to Hell is an emancipation, every swing from Hell to Heaven an evolution. Where you now see reform, progress, fulfillment of upward tendency...you will see nothing but an infinite comedy of illusion...
>
> * * *

in this short excerpt from their argument that boredom, "men get tired of everything," is contrasted with enthusiasm, "Were I not possessed with a purpose beyond my own"; stasis and indifference on the part of nature, part of the "infinite comedy of illusion," with change and benevolence in nature, "I...am as much a part of Nature as my own finger is part of me"; isolation of the individual character with the attitude that man participates in a force which transcends mere existence: "my brain is the organ by which Nature strives to understand itself." In Shaw, we see that Juan's belief in the Life Force ultimately discounts the Devil's argument, and yet there is a sense that Shaw sympathizes with the opinion that man is in danger of becoming overcome by isolation, futility, and the lack of understanding of both himself and his world. If man defeats his expectations as he struggles to realize himself, then he must accept the devilish comedy of illusion. Shaw expresses both arguments, but other playwrights describe the first by showing the defeat of the second. This, then, is the essence of the defeat of human expectations: man's potential and purposes are undermined by the reality of indifference and isolation.

Shaw, like other dramatists, stresses conflicts in men's lives, but although he offers a solution in Man and Superman, in the guise of the Life Force, he does not resolve the conflicts of understanding and purpose, the illusion and the ruthlessness of reality. His characters are--in the Devil's terminology--part of "the infinite comedy of illusion" because they struggle against the defeat or alteration of their expectations. As mentioned before, it is significant that Shaw shows how a character's illusion is based both on a concern for progress and a pessimism brought on by fear of or confrontation with defeat. Both concerns have equal bearing in his life. In general, however, playwrights of this period examine characters' responses to conflicts within and outside of their particular lives, but although they may ascribe causes to such conflicts, like Shaw, they tend to leave the conflicts unresolved in order to emphasize the continual defeat of expectations. We should make a distinction between those expectations which are generated by the character and those which are generated by his interaction with others; the struggle against the defeat or alteration of these expectations is the same, although the implications of the struggle and defeat differ. Certainly, the character will not be able to

expectations: man's potential and purpose are undermined by the reality of indifference and isolation.

Shaw, like other dramatists, stresses conflicts in man's *lives*, but although he offers a solution in *Man and Superman*, in the plays of his later life he does not resolve the conflict of understanding and purpose the illusion and the brilliance of reality. His characters are—in the Devil's terminology—part of 'the infinitesimally small illusion' become truly struggle against the defeat or alteration of their expectations. As mentioned before, it is significant that Shaw shows how a character's illusion is broadened on a cosmic, not physical and emotional plane by the loss of or confrontation with ideas. Such concerns have equal bearing in his life. In general, however, playwrights of this period examine characters' responses to conflicts within and outside of their particular lives, but although they may ascribe causes to man conflicts, like Shaw, they tend to leave the conflicts unresolved in order to emphasize the continual defeat of expectations. We should make a distinction between those expectations which are generated by the character and those which are generated by his interaction with others, the struggle against the defeat or alteration of those expectations is the same, although the implications of the struggle and defeat differ. Certainly, the character will not be able to

in this short excerpt from their argument that position, "man yet tried of everything," is contrasted with astonishment. "Here I am possessed with a purpose beyond myself," man and indifference on the part of nature, part of the "infinite capacity of illusion" with cosmic and benevolence in nature. "I...am as much a part of Nature as my own finger is part of me." isolation of the individual character with the attitude that man participates in a force which transcends mere existence, "perhaps it is the urge by which Nature strives [unconscious] [self] to Shaw, we see that Joan's belief in the Life Force ultimately decorates the Devil's argument and we have in a sense that Shaw symphathizes with the opinion that man is in danger of becoming overcome by isolation, futility, and the lack of understanding of both himself and his world. If man defeats his expectations or is struggling against them, he must escape the British comedy of illusion. Shaw expresses such arguments, for often [playwrights describe the flaw by showing the defeat of the world. This flaw is the essence of the failure of human

impose his own definitions onto an exterior world which is indifferent to him, and yet he must suffer the imposition of society's ideas on him. On a more personal level, he must also suffer the imposition of his fellow characters' expectations concerning him, for often one character creates expectations concerning other characters when he refuses to accept the implications of his own failed hopes. The conflict between personal resolve and exterior obligation operates on all levels, then, for the disparity between one character's life and his attitudes about others' lives is often paralleled by the disparity between the roles that others expect him to take and those roles which the exterior world imposes on him. This anaylsis of the defeat of expectations, in other words, involves an understanding of the relationship that a character has to other characters.

Isolation, then, is related more to the defeat of expectations than it is to the physical situation of men, though certain playwrights, like Becket and Pinter, may emphasize physical isolation to underscore the futility of hope and aspirations. On the whole, the quality of a character's struggle against the modification of his expectations lies in the degree to which his actions have any bearing on the circumstances of his life. The analysis of the quality of this struggle against defeat is closely connected to the examination of the extent to which illusion is dispelled for the character. Where deception restricts the effectiveness of a character's resolve, the absence of illusion seems to affirm the value of action. As a result, we see that if a character preserves his illusions, he possibly lacks the ability to change himself, and so he will be unable to change anything of consequence in his world. The playwrights differ in their emphasis on a character's ability to change himself, and in this paper, we will find that the dramatists can be divided according to such distinctions. There are some, such as Ibsen, Brecht, O'Casey, Pirandello, Williams, O'Neill, Beckett and Pinter, who deny the individual's ability to overcome the pressure of exterior influence, but even these playwrights can be further differentiate according to the degree of self-awareness that they believe man has.

Here, physical isolation is used to define a form of alienation which separates the character from others just as his own deceptive expectations set him apart from what he could achieve, what he can know of himself. Where exterior influences are underplayed, are used as a

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Here, physical isolation is used to define a form of alienation which separates the character from others in his own deception, or even when playwrights can be driven to overcome the pressure of exterior influences. Williams, O'Neill, Becket and Pinter, who deny the individual's ability to change himself in consequence in his world. Theplaywrights differ in their emphasis on a character's ability to change himself, and in this chapter, we will find that the dramatists can be divided according to such distinctions. There are some, such as Ibsen, Brecht, O'Casey, Pirandello, Williams, O'Neill, Becket and Pinter, who deny the individual's ability to perceive his universe, he possibly lacks the ability to change himself, and may well be unable to achieve, what he can know of himself. Where exterior influences are underplayed stressed as a the absence of illusion seems to affect the value of action. As a result, we see that in a character's struggle against either the modification of his expectations lies in the degree to which his actions have any bearing on the circumstances of his life. The analysis of the quality of this displayed for the character. Where deception restricts the effectiveness of a character's response strength against either is closely connected to the examination of the extent to which illusion is central to other characters.

Isolation, then, is related more to the denial of expectations than it is to the physical separation of men, though certain playwrights like Becket and Pinter, may emphasize physical isolation to underscore the futility of hope and aspiration. On the whole, the quality of a character's struggle against the modification of his expectations lies in the degree to which his actions are motivated by the discrepancy between the roles that others expect him to take and those roles which the dramatist would impose on him. This analysis of the desire of man is often paralleled by the disparity between one character's life and his attempts about others all levels, but the disparity between personal desires and exterior obligation operates on his own false hopes. The conflict between personal desires and exterior obligation operates on many dramatic characters, especially when the individual is confronted by the implications of his fellow characters' expectations concerning him, for often one character creates expectations concerning other characters which he refuses to accept the implications of these expectations may also affect him on a more personal level. In short, a character's ability to change his own definitions into an existential world is conditioned to him, and by his own

reflection of isolation which the individual character imposes on himself, then we find little action which can be undertaken, because little can be done. These circumstances imply a more pessimistic view of human nature than those where man is overwhelmed by forces beyond his control, and yet we ought to recognize that in modern drama, stasis can be externalized as easily as it can be internalized. By emphasizing the perception of each character, a playwright asserts the relevancy of the individual interpretation over the external reality, as we see in the plays of Pirandello, Williams, and O'Neill, or in the more existential works of Beckett and Pinter. In this sense, the reality of characters' situations is relative to their perceptions of them, and the characters may, to some extent, determine the circumstances of the reality in which they live. When two perceptions of reality clash, however, then there is a conflict which cannot be resolved without some sort of redefinition of terms. It is at this point that we come full circle, back to the plays of Ibsen and Chekhov, who asserted the need for the redefinition of terms. And so we see that the implications of action, understanding, isolation, and the like are all inter-related. As action becomes less important to the drama, characters become distinct from each other and from the world that they inhabit because of the expectations that they create for themselves. When a playwright, such as Pirandello, qualifies the expectations of his characters by arguing that they are all equally justified interpretations of reality, are all equally destructive of the individual and his reality, we can anticipate a conflict. These expectations will eventually clash with those of others, and the resulting redefinition, noted above, has within it the potential to overcome the isolation of the individual from others, though it cannot overcome a character's sense of isolation from the fulfillment of his expectations.

This drama is concerned with depicting a life which the characters can only understand by reflection; it is not a life of opportunities, but a life of misapprehension and unwillingness to realize the self. The plays of the eleven dramatists described in the following chapters are primarily concerned with the sort of response that defeated expectations elicit; they are concerned with the duality of experience: dependence on others--on the need for confirmation of existence--and independance from forces which confound what the character most desires.

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influence of isolation which the individual character imposes on himself, than we find in

Such yearnings for dependance and independence are equally damning, for both are expressions of an eagerness to discover some purpose to an existence whose purpose is unknowable at best. We will examine the selected plays of these dramatists by observing the manner in which they question the restraints that characters impose on themselves, the degree of self-awareness that they have, and the importance of expectations in their lives. Reaching back to the quotation from Man and Superman which was used to introduce the discussion of the nature of illusion and deception, we see that the Devil's assertion of stasis over Don Juan's testimony to progress contains within it the argument that the preservation of expectations is necessary, although such preservation may seem futile. On the whole, then, when a character fears leading a meaningless, futile life, or actually finds himself leading one, such fear intensifies earlier expectations and gives rise to new ones. The "infinite comedy of illusion" that the Devil speaks of may not be a "comedy," in the true sense of the word, in all these plays, and it may not be concerned with illusion so much as with deception or ignorance. However, its "infinite" quality, a characteristic of seemingly limitless defeat and restriction on the individual, is a quality which all the plays share. All these plays describe a reality over which no character can seize absolute control, although some control may be possible for some characters.

characters.

no character can state absolute control, although some control may be possible to some individual, in a society which all the plays share. All these plays describe a reality over which "infinite" duality, a characteristic of seemingly limitless desire and ambition on the one hand may be contained with illusion to mock as with deception or ignorance. However, in that the Devil appears it may not be a "comedy." In the treatment of the word in all these plays there lurking a meaningless tragic risk or actually trade himself leading one, with her interwtine earlier expectations and give rise to new ones. The "infinite comedy of illusion" necessary, although such presentation may seem futile. On the whole then, when a character fashioned topsoil-ex contains within it the argument that the presentation of explanations a the nature of illusion and deception, as are that the Devil's assertion of status over Don Juan's back to the question from Man and Superman which warranted to introduce the discussion of of self-awareness that they have, and the importance of explanations in their lives. Enacting manner in which they question the constructs that characters impose on themselves, the degree understandable at best. We will examine the selected plays of these dimensions by identifying the objectives of an endeavours to discover some purpose to an existence whose purpose is given certainty for dependent and independent are equally demanded for both as

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Henrik Ibsen

Ibsen represents modern life in its complexity, for although he wishes to address specific issues and problems in society, he does not attempt to offer a solution to these issues and problems. The complications of a life are not easily removed, and so his characters cannot be saved from boredom, disillusionment, horror, or condemnation by a happy ending, nor can they be released and glorified by dying with anything resembling tragic importance. Clearly, Ibsen does not offer the old form of resolution because he is attacking those forces--social, moral, instinctual, and historical--which influence men's lives. In the plays of his middle period, Ibsen's characters are held back by or are unable to break through the morality of the day; we find characters, such as Mrs. Alving, who are unable to deal adequately with the complications they encounter; characters who only add to the complications imposed on them by outside forces; characters, like Gregers in The Wild Duck, who confuse truth with happiness. Ibsen's analysis of such problems is not consistent, for in different plays he chooses to view human life from different angles, and his vision of degenerate culture in one play may contradict his assertion of the power of the individual against society in the next, but such contradictions are not problematic. If he consistently asserts anything, Ibsen asserts the necessity for man to realize himself in spite of the contradictory and complicated forces which overwhelm him. Such a stance is realistic, since the individual cannot overcome society, although he can acquire an understanding of his place in that society. In notes to an early draft of The Wild Duck, for example, Ibsen simply makes note of "the complication of what is inherited and what is habitual."[1] We realize from this phrase that Ibsen's concern with the forces of society does not preclude his awareness that such forces can be all-encompassing, as in the eye disease inherited by Hedvig in The Wild Duck, merely influential, as in the inherited mores which disrupt more relationships than they bring together, or habitual, as in Gregers's

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Henrik Ibsen

ability to destroy others' happiness in an effort to relieve his own conscience. In other words, a character's actions may be undermined by society's mores, or he may use such mores to damn himself unintentionally.

The complications to which Ibsen's characters respond often involve a conflict between other notions of "habitual" and "hereditary," namely a conflict between duty and instinct. While Ibsen does recognize that action may be a positive response to a conflict, he questions the motives behind such actions. Action may be undertaken to satisfy the desire for truth, but the search for truth is not independent of risks. When, in a play like An Enemy of the People, Ibsen examines the consequences of acknowledging and rejecting the truth, he exalts the powerful will of one standing alone against "the Compact Majority" while acknowledging the role of ego in most social politics. Dr. Stockmann blusters and fusses at the way he is being treated by his fellow citizens, only to be advised by his pragmatic wife, "Yes, they've treated you disgracefully, I will say that. But heavens! Once you start thinking of all the injustices in this world people have to put up with...!".[2]

Defeat is only one of the risks against which men must struggle; when duty is confused with instinct, as in The Wild Duck, happiness can be destroyed. In notes to this play, Ibsen speaks of "the danger of undermining ideals."[3] Certainly, truth can be beneficial in destroying illusions; the truth can also be destructive. Ibsen does not always determine whether it is better to live with illusion or without it, but he does assert that, in the confrontation of one man's action with another man's resolve, customary standards of behaviour may be as easily condemned as they are lauded. Above all, he recognizes the need for each man to resist the conflicts in his life and conscience. When he discusses the end of Hedda Gabler, the significance of Hedda's death, and the ironies of Tesman and Mrs. Elvsted's analysis of "The Moral Doctrine of the Future," Ibsen declares, "there is something beautiful in working for an objective. Even if it is a mistaken one."[4] While it may be difficult to recognise Mrs. Alving's or Greger's actions as "beautiful," we do recognize the integrity of their deeds, even if they are wrong ones.

Thus we see how it is possible for Ibsen to use irony to highlight the conflict between character and community, between man's expectation and the reality in which he finds

have to live with."[5]

I will say that, like Dr. Stockmann, Ibsen does not always determine what is better for society. Ibsen does not always determine what is better for society. Ibsen does not always determine what is better for society.

himself, between the expectations of some and the actions of others. Ibsen is interested in circumstance, in the interplay of action with incident as the clearest way to display the hypocrisy and irony of words. Time and time again, a character's posturing is cut short by a change in action, a change in plot. In A Doll's House, the whole play is really built around an incident: the last scene, the importance of which Ibsen acknowledges in a letter to Count Moritz Prozor, saying, "it is precisely on account of the final scene that the whole play was written."[5] Another incident, preceding the action of the play, initiates the change in Nora's attitude which results in the final action. The initial factor is Nora's method of securing funds to cover her husband's journey to the south, for she obtains the money out of love for him and concern for his health. Although such concern is instinctive for her, it is also an expression of the duty which she feels she owes to her husband. This is what Ibsen means when he observes in his preparatory notes that Nora is "bewildered in the play: her natural instincts on the one side and her faith in authority on the other leave her completely confused."[6] Instinct and duty, which seem to have been nearly synonymous at the time when Nora made the decision to borrow the money from Krogstad, conflict with one another as the play opens and proceeds, for Nora's expectations are produced and continuously re-defined or undermined by the situations that the conflict generates. What had been Nora's declaration of love and duty soon becomes the means for her independence.

When Nora feels herself pulled between obedience and duty on the one hand, and the desire to preserve the integrity of her own individual action on the other hand, Ibsen can demonstrate both the power and hypocrisy of social standards as they are exemplified by the rule of a pedagogue. It is here that we see most clearly the predominance of Nora's action in the final scene, for although the conflict between instinct and duty generates her responses, the influence of her husband the pedagogue maintains the need for such responses. Torvald, too, has expectations which were generated by a conflict in society. At the opening of the play, we get the sense that Torvald's playful chastising of and control over Nora, his "little spendthrift" (ADH: p. 202),[7] even though they are affectionate, are employed because Torvald clearly sees Nora as a reflection of and on himself. The repartee, with all its chastising and appeasement,

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seems to run along old, recognized lines. He readily admits that he likes to have Nora around to amuse him, for he is "bored" (p. 206) when she is not there; yet she is less an object to entertain him than an object with which he can entertain himself. It is not until much later in the play that we come to understand that Torvald's manner of dealing with a problem in his household is a reflection on his inability to seize control in the larger world. Home-life is a microcosm, a farce of the order which the individual cannot control in society as a whole. Nora herself readily admits that Torvald likes an ordered world where he is ruler and where few outside claims are made on those he rules.

Torvald's influence over his wife is so great that even her manner of dealing with a problem is modelled on his, even though he condemns her for taking such an approach. He usually begins with an accusation, follows through with a platitude or generalization, then goes on to denial, an attempt to cover up all things because he cannot bear to deal with them directly. After Krogstad confronts her with the forgery, Nora attempts to hide the fact of his visit from Torvald, but cannot deceive him to that extent. He accuses her of telling him a lie:

> Didn't you say that nobody has been here? [*wagging his finger at her*]. Never again must my little song-bird do a thing like that! Little song-birds must keep their pretty little beaks out of mischief, no chirping out of tune! [*puts his arm around her waist*] Isn't that the way we want things to be? Yes, of course it is. [*Let her go*]. So let's say no more about it. [*Sits down by the stove*]. Ah, nice and cozy here!
>
> [p. 282]

We get the sense that the tyrannical rule of Torvald over Nora, while it suppresses her own actions and desires, is itself the product of one man's struggles against the destruction of his own expectations: to be in control, if not at the office, then at home. In other words, while we observe Nora's growing assertion of her own independence, we are also aware that his wife's alteration of her expectations defeats Torvald's own expectations.

The alteration in Nora's view of her relation to her husband occurs simultaneously with the expectations she has concerning her role as a woman and a mother. Initially, her views support Torvald's views of conjugal duty, for she is happy to follow along with the customary

influence Torvald's views of conjugal duty, for she is prepared to follow along with the convictions the expectations she has consciously put aside as a woman and a mother. Initially, her views

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pare.

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[Ibsen dismisses Christine]. Ah, nice and comfy here. So let's say no more about it. [Sits down by the stove.] So, I'm sitting here, feeling happy and contented. And when I've got you at my side, my trusting little darling, all the pettiness of our married life, that's the way it seems to me, [Turns his chair a bit closer to her.] Yes, I'm right, aren't I? Ah, I've got a strong feeling that I must keep you very close to me. I'll tell you something, Nora. I was thinking of you all the time we were out together. [Lowers his voice.] Didn't you say that nobody has been here? [Adjusting his chair at her.] Never

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problem is modelled on his, even though he condemns her for taking such an approach. He

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claims are made on those be rules.

readily admits that Torvald lives an ordered world where he is right and where his convic-

face of the order which the individual cannot control in society as a whole. Nora herself

is a reflection on his inability to take control in the large world. Home-life is a microcosm, a

that we come to understand that Torvald's manner of dealing with a problem in his bookkeeping

pin than an object with which he can entertain himself. It is not until much later in the play

sumes him, for he is "bored" (p. 836) when she is not there. Yet she is less an object to entertain

repartee. She is happy to be able to do things for him and revels in the secret she keeps from him: "Ah, if only you knew how many expenses the likes of us sky-larks and squirrels have, Torvald!" (p. 204). Like a child, she plays when she is pleased with herself and rewards herself for actions she thinks are meritorious by doing what she is forbidden to do. Of course, nibbling on macaroons is a minor act of rebellion against Torvald's domination, but, more than this, it shows the beginnings of Nora's confusion about the nature of her loyalty to Torvald: love or duty? By keeping from Torvald the secret of Krogstad's loan, she seems to believe that his opinion of her should be enough, but it is not long before she sees that silence on her part is a means of protecting his views of himself, and, consequently, his views of her. In this way, the pleasure she initially took in aiding her husband turns to fear, as she grows to doubt the quality of his affection for her. When she tells Kristine Linde that she cannot tell him the truth because "it would be terribly embarrassing and humiliating for him if he thought he owed anything to me. It would spoil everything between us; this happy home of ours would never be the same again" (p. 215), she goes on to question the power such an admission might have, when his love is doubted: "When Torvald isn't quite so much in love with me as he is now, when he's lost interest in watching me dance, or get dressed up, or recite. Then it will be a good thing to have something in reserve....[*Breaks off*] What nonsense!" (p. 215). Characteristically at this point in the play, she tries to imagine away all troubling thoughts. She is not yet responding to the challenges made to her expectations with anything other than denial.

Although Nora knows that Torvald likes to fuss over her, make decisions for her, play with her like a doll, she also knows that she can easily manipulate him by agreeing to follow such behaviour. All this while, she is growing more aware of the complication of her deed done for his sake. When confronted by Krogstad, she adamantly believes in the likelihood of a "miracle" occurring: Torvald will take the blame upon himself when Nora is confronted with the crime, and she will then take her life to save him from punishment. The heroic stance she ascribes to her husband and to herself in such a daydream is undercut by Krogstad's comment to her that "People don't do such things, Mrs. Helmer" (p. 254). Here, Ibsen undercuts individual idealism with an appeal to those very social standards which condemn and suppress the

identity AND an object in class and social machinery which measures and influences the[m] that "People don't do such things, Mrs. Helmer." (p. 324). Here, Ibsen underscores individual reactions to her husband and to herself in such a dehydrated is undercut by Nora's commitment to the crime, and she will then take her life to save him from punishment. The interference the "miracle" occurring. Torvald will take the blame upon himself when Nora is confronted with his rule. When confronted by Krogstad, she adamantly believes in the likelihood of such behaviour. All this while, she is growing more aware of the complexities of her dependency with her like a doll; she also knows that she can secretly manipulate him by appearing to follow

Although Nora knows that Torvald likes to toss over her, make decisions for her, play challenges made to her expectations with anything other than denial.

the play, she tries to imagine away all troubling thoughts. She is not yet responding to the *unconscious* (Jowett and) What *consumes*" (p. 219). Characteristically at this point in interest in watching me dance, or get dressed up, or recite. Then it will be a good thing to have is denied. "When Torvald isn't quite so much in love with me as he is now, when he's lost *again*" (p. 219), she goes on to question the power such an admission might have, when his love me. It would spoil everything between us; this pretty home of ours would never be the same. It would (terribly embarrassing and humiliating for him if he thought he owed anything to of his affection for her. When she tells Rankine that she cannot tell him the truth because pleasure she initially took in aiding her husband to live, as she grows to doubt the gravity means of protecting his views of himself and, consequently, his view of her. In this way, the opinion of her should be enough, but it is not long before she sees that silence on her part is only" by keeping from Torvald the cause of Krogstad's loan. She seems to believe that his shows the beginnings of Nora's confusion about the nature of her loyalty to Torvald: love or on marriages is a minor act of rebellion against Torvald's domination, but, more than this, a for actions she thinks are meritorious by doing what she is forbidden to do. Of course, robbing Torvald" (p. 208). Like a child, she plays when she is pleased with herself and knows right from him: "Ah, if only you knew how many expenses the likes of us slip-jaws and squirrels have reprieve. She is happy to be able to do *things* for him and revels in the secret she keeps from

individual, those very standards under which Nora must function. As she grows more aware of the restrictions which are involved with Torvald's expectations of her, she comes to see that the original act of selflessness on her part becomes an act which she can regard as an action done to affirm her own self-worth. It is here that we see more evidence of Ibsen's use of irony to undercut and qualify the progress of action and attitude in his character's lives. At the conclusion to act two, when Nora is once again speaking of doing herself in ("thirty-one hours to live")--this time more out of fear and self-affirmation than love--Torvald calls for her: "What's happened to our little sky-lark?" (p. 261). Even though Nora goes running to him, we know that the appeal of such a role is beginning to pall for Nora.

Thus in the not always pleasing integration of inner conflict and outer conflict in Nora's life, we sense Ibsen's assertion that, for Nora, Torvald, and even Krogstad, the realization of the false expectations that others have can lead to the realization that one's own expectations may be equally false. In this play, these two sets of expectations are often one and the same, are nearly inextricably bound to each other. Most likely, such integration of forces on the lives of characters and such an attempt to unify both the consequences and inherent falsity of actions are due to Ibsen's emphasis on the final confrontation in the last scene. The final action, one which may have a positive outcome, compensates for the earlier scenes where motives are classified into justified ones and punishable ones, where irony hints at the difference between the struggle to be made and the hypocrisy of the words said. For example, Torvald, just before he opens the fateful letter from Krogstad, tells his dear wife, "many's the time I wish you were threatened by some terrible danger so I could risk everything, body and soul, for your sake" (p. 274). The reality of Nora's situation will destroy the validity of such a fanciful wish, for Torvald only considers the way that Nora's crime reflects upon him; in his concern for his social station and in his tenuous struggle for control, he does not consider that she may have done the deed for his sake. Upon receiving the IOU from Krogstad, however, his opinion changes. His approach to the problem is then one of characteristic denial, in addition to the coddling and appeasement, to which Nora is accustomed. Offering his forgiveness to her, he revels in this apparent token of his concern and control: "For a man, there's something

reveals in this apparent token of his concern and control: "For a man there's something comforting and appeasement, to which Nora is accustomed. Dimitrij his employment to put. In marriage. His experience is the problem is than one of circumstantial detail. In addition to the done the deed for his sake. Upon awakening the IOU from Krupkaul. However, his opinion money matters and in his anxious struggle for control he does not consider that she may have forged her father's signature on her part becomes an act which she can defend as an action dictated by the circumstances which are involved with Torvald's expectations of her, she comes to see that the inadequacy, those very standards under which Nora must function. As she grows more aware of

indescribably moving and very satisfying in knowing that he has forgiven his wife....It's as though it made her his property in a double sense: he has, as it were, given her a new life, and she becomes in a way both his wife and his child" (p. 278). Ibsen perhaps overemphasizes Torvald's paternalism in order to assert the need for Nora's action, but Torvald's statement does have a place in that it shows how much he is still struggling against any alteration in the status quo. Such a struggle occurs just at that time when Nora is beginning to alter her own expectations, and it is ironic that the "forgiveness" he grants her does give her a "new life," one in which she strives to distinguish herself from him.

"You are talking like a child. You understand nothing about the society you live in" (p. 288), Torvald tells Nora when she has declared her resolve to fulfill the duty she feels toward herself. Perhaps Torvald is correct; perhaps Nora will not be able to function within the society or outside of it, but it is important to note that Torvald can function no better. At the conclusion of the play, we do not know if and how he copes. Presumably, he would be bored without her. There is uncertainty in all actions, however, and although the play does depict the overcoming of forces oppressive to the individual, the outcome is left unresolved. The play is not static, but the events it describes are in a state of transition: Dr. Rank is not yet dead, although his death is expected; Kristine Linde and Krogstad are just about to begin again; Torvald is finally made to confront the independent will of his wife and his own lack of control; Nora's rebellion has just been most fully realized. The Doll's House is essentially the Dolls' House as well, since the forces which influence the characters cannot be avoided without exacting a price, often a painful price. Any awkwardness of this play is derived from this undercurrent of conflicting obligations and desires, for as much as Ibsen stresses the final confrontation and its significance as the assertion of individuality against oppression, he does not avoid at least partial emphasis on the interplay of one character's resolutions with another's. Such associations are dense, though underemphasized, in this play, but their richness and potential for various interpretations were waiting to be exploited in plays where the significance of decisiveness and action was slightly less.

Individual action cannot always bring about a resolution in the conflicts surrounding a

the significance of decisiveness and action was slightly less.

Individual action could be simply about a contribution to the collective movement's richness and potential for various interpretations were waiting to be explored in black opera audiences. Such associations are drawn through underemphasized in this play, but they are not vague or just partial emphasis on the interplay of one character's responses may continuation and its significance as the creation of individually abstract objectivity. By deconstruction of conflicting obligations and desires, for as much as does matter the inner examine a prior, often a personal prior. Any expectations in this play is derived from this Daily Bonn as well since the focus which influences the characters cannot be avoided without counsel Bona's rebellion has just been mostly resized. The Daily Bonn is essentially the Torvald is finally made to confront the independent will of his wife and his own lack of although his death is expected Kristine Linde and Krogstad are still about to begin again not static, but the events it describes are in a state of transition: Dr. Rank is not the classic awareness of those objectives to the individual, the outcome is left unresolved. The play is without her. There is uncertainty in all actions however, and although the play does depict the conclusion of the play, we do not know it and how he does. Eventually, he would be living in outside of it, but it is important to note that Torvald the function no longer. At the herself. Perhaps Torvald is content perhaps Bona will not be given freedom within the society Doll. Torvald tells Nora when she first declared her resolve to fulfill the duty she feels toward

"You are talking like a child. You understand nothing about the society you live in." (p. in which she strives to distinguish herself from him.

criticisms and it is ironic that the "storybreakers" be given due since her a "new life," one Krogstad, too, finds a struggle comes just at that time when Nora is beginning to alter his own does have a place in that it shows how much he is still struggling against any alteration in the Torvald's patronization in order to assert the need for Nora's action, but Torvald's statement she becomes in a way just his wife and his child." (p. 210) Nora perhaps overemphasizes strongly it made his decisively in a similar manner as it were. Given her a new life and

character, as Ibsen himself realises. Even in A Doll's House, he shows how one character's expectations can so easily destroy the social status or moral position of another character. For example, Krogstad's feeble attempts at blackmail show his desperation at the thought of being ruined once again. The individual's struggles may be essentially futile, his expectations merely ridiculous. Similarly, just as characters may fight to free themselves from the burden of others' expectations of them, so they may also fight against the legacy left to them by the dissolute or indecisive lives of other characters. Such legacies are usually associated with disease, since Ibsen examines the existence of social corruption in both the hypocrisy and physical degeneration of society. In Ghosts, for example, Ibsen deals with physical disease as the legacy of man's inadequate responses to the conflicts overpowering him. In this play, a character is not simply struggling against society as the instigator of man's use of outmoded and impractical attitudes; he struggles against those very acts of rebellion, or those acts of self-affirmation which were described in A Doll's House. Nora's attempt to free herself from Torvald's control is now examined, in Ghosts, in light of its consequences for others, and we see how Ibsen took up the problem of the husband's abandonment, the child's legacy, the wife's inablility to escape from what she sees as the horrors of past ideas and beliefs. These are ghosts. Liberation of the self does not necessarily lead to progress. An act of either rebellion or self-affirmation may remove one from the authority of another, but it does not remove one from the society which first established such ideas of conformity.

The strength of the attitudes generated by and directed towards society is most clearly seen in the equivocations of Pastor Manders, for Ibsen uses this character to call attention to hypocrisy which, while it is the product of a degenerate civilization, is also finely tuned and strong enough to exert influence on the lives of all, even those who reject it. In the first act of the play, Manders and Mrs. Alving disagree over the question of moral and immoral books. Mrs. Alving asserts the right of individual opinion, only to be chastised by Manders, "My dear lady, there are many occasions in life when one must rely on others. That's the way of the world, and things are best that way. How else would society manage?" (G: p. 360). Of course, he begs the question, and such an argumentative devise is characteristic of him, because he argues for the

question, and only an eighteenth-century device is characteristic of him. Powers in science for the theme are most conventional: "Ill p. 960). Of course, he does not always use this device. There are many occasions in life when one must rely on others. That's the way the world runs. Having answers the style of individual opinion, only to be characterize Members. "My dear lady, Having answers the style of individual opinion, only to be characterize Members. "My dear lady, play, Members and Mrs. Having deserves over the question of moral and immoral books. Mrs. strong enough to exert influence on the lives of all, and [illegible] to the time we often [illegible] which, while it is the product of a degenerate civilization, is also finely tuned and subtle. Mrs. Having answers the style of individual opinion, only to be characterize Members. "My dear lady, play, Members and Mrs. Having deserves over the question of moral and immoral books. Mrs. strong enough to exert influence on the lives of all, and [illegible] to the time we often [illegible] which, while it is the product of a degenerate civilization, is also finely tuned and subtle.

The strength of the attitudes personified and dramatized in the story is made clearly from the society which first established such ideas of conformity.

self-affirmation may remove one from the authority of another, but it does not remove one liberation or the self does not necessarily lead to progress. An act of unfair rebellion or responsibility to escape from what she sees as the barriers of past ideas and beliefs. There are figures how Jones took up the problem of the bankrupt aboriginal: the child's helper, the wife's Terriady comment is now examined. In Ulysses, in light of its consequences for others, and we the self-affirmation which were described in A Doll's House. Ibsen's attempt to free herself from implication) attitudes: to struggle against those very acts of rebellion) or those acts of one simply struggling against society as the interpret of man's sin of committed and of man's inadequate responses to the conflicts overpowering him. In this play, a character in deformation of society. In Ulysses, for example, Ibsen does with physical) disease as the subjective lives of other characters. Such legacies are usually associated with disease since these examine the existence of social corruption in both the hysterically and physical explanations of them, so they may also fight against the helpful lot to them by the illusions or illusions. Similarly, just as characters may fight to free themselves from the burden of social relationship can so easily destroy the social status or moral position of another character. For example, frequently feeble attempts at bisexual show his departure at the thought of being

necessity of man's subordination to society and yet has an abiding concern for its view of him. His confusion about the distinction between an individual's role and his attitude is also shown in his underestimation of the intensity of love and sex in the lives of men; because it ignores the relevance of human desire, his advice is not applicable. Oswald tells him about friends who are cohabitating in order to avoid the expense of marriage, saying, "But what are they to do?"; Manders: "What are they to do?...They should have kept away from each other from the very start--that's what they should have done!" (p. 869). Since Manders lives all for appearances, and since he has a high opinion of moral purity, it is especially ironic that he must agree to invest in Engstrand's whorehouse in order to escape the blame for starting the fire at the orphanage. Such a situation is appropriate, for when duty is in conflict with instinct and desire, duty has the alarming tendency to win out. Manders says as much in a speech which Ibsen cut from the final draft of the play: "One has certain obligation towards the society one lives in. With a good and useful aim in life to work for--and all of us ought to have that, Mrs. Alving--one owes it to that aim and one owes it to oneself to appear in the eyes of the public in as blameless a light as possible. Because if one is not blameless, one gets nowhere."[8]

As hypocritical as Mander's argument is, there is some validity to it as well. The irony of Mrs. Alving's position is her obedience to social decorum, her concern for the preservation of her husband and son's reputation, which she professes to Manders, and her neglect, through such hypocrisy, of their real needs. She laments the motives behind her marriage and, as Manders tells her that "law and order" were behind the sealing of the match, says impulsively, "Oh, all this law and order! I often think *that's* the cause of all the trouble in the world" (p. 881). Certainly, Ibsen argues time and time again that custom cannot dictate human nature, and yet here her misery is due more to her reaction to such restraints than to the imposition of such restraints upon her. She lied to Oswald in order to follow Manders's advice about her duty to society, and, like Nora, her instinct conflicts with her sense of duty. In consistently asserting that she has subordinated all to duty, she neglects to realize that she could have resisted such a restraint in a different way. She begins to realize both the depths of the "disease" with which she and her family must cope and the part that her own actions played in bringing on the

possible. Because if one is not pleased, one gets nowhere."[8]

that she would owe it to herself to depart in the kind of life pursuit to be pleased a light to and useful aim in life to work for—and all of *us* make to be a Mrs. Alving—one sees it to final draft of the play. "One has certain obligation towards the society one is in." With a good

As psychiatrist as Mendes's argument is, there is some validity to it as well. The image of Mrs. Alving's position is her opposite to social division, her concern for the preservation of her husband and son's reputation. What she postures to Mendes, and her earlier, ironically, Mendes tells her that "law and order" were peopled the setting of the world, ironically any objectify of state and woods. She laments the workers paying her marriage and, a

"Of all this law and order I care [pity]. That's the cause of all the trouble in the world." (p. 661) Certainly, there other time and time again that reason cannot direct human nature, maybe but not entirely in the more to not reaction to deep instincts that to the imposition of

Mendes's view of marriage is not applicable. Oswald tells him about friends who ex- relevance of human desire, his advice is not applicable. Oswald tells him about friends who ex- perimented in order to avoid the expense of marriage, replied, "But what was that to do?" Mendes: "What are they to do? ... They should have kept away from each other from the very start—that's what they should have done." (p. 669). Since Mendes lives all for observance, and since he pre- a high opinion of moral beauty, it is especially ironic that he must advise in man- ter Engstrand who proposes it, one to escape the blame for starting the life of the unpleasant-

Such a situation is objectionable, for when duty is in conflict with instinct and desire, duty pre- the electrical connection to win out. Mendes says as much in a speech which does not come

disease when she hears Oswald and Regina in the dining room:

> I'm inclined to think that we are all ghosts, Pastor Manders, every one of us. It's not just what we inherit from our mothers and fathers that haunts us. It's all kinds of old defunct theories, all sorts of old defunct beliefs, and things like that. It's not that they actually *live* on in us; they are simply lodged there, and we cannot get rid of them....Over the whole country there must be ghosts....And here we are, all of us, abysmally afraid of the light.
>
> [p. 384]

Ghosts rise in present circumstances because we have not dealt with them as we should have in the past. By denying her husband the "joy of life," Mrs. Alving seemingly overindulges in asserting her responsibility to herself and neglects her responsibility to others. The burning of the orphanage, built with her husband's money, symbolises the hypocrisy of her intent, as well as the irrevocability of action: it burns at that very moment when she wishes to reveal the lies and false actions. In many ways, the fire also represents the conflict and defeat of the characters' resolve. Ibsen acknowledges such a conflict in notes to an early draft of the play: "the play will be like an image of life. Faith undermined. But it is not done to admit it. 'The Orphanage'--for the sake of others. They are to be happy--this is also merely an illusion--everything is ghosts--".[9]

However hard the individual may struggle within or against the social medium, he will eventually be brought to the realization that old forces are strong, often indestructible. In Ghosts, Ibsen implies that such forces are strong because of the dichotomy between the individual's struggle against society and his struggle against this often unrecognized responsibility to others, and, for this reason, there is the close connection between the characters' conflict itself and the defeat of their expectations. The "ghosts," the re-appearances of the father's characteristics in the son, the mother's characteristics in the daughter, do not occur irrevocably, uncontrollably. Mrs. Alving's actions and decisions might have prevented part of her husband's downfall, might have saved her son from his gruesome end. At the same time, however, the likelihood of such patterns of behaviour re-appearing in the next generation is great enough to save Mrs. Alving from severe condemnation. Part of the horror of the last

dizzies when she hears Oswald and Regina in the dining room:

> I'm inclined to think that we are all ghosts, Pastor Manders, every one of us. It's not just what we inherit from our mothers and fathers that haunts us, it's all kinds of old defunct ghosts, all sorts of old defunct beliefs, and things like that. We are not *actually* living on it, they are simply lodged there, and we cannot get rid of them....Over the whole country there must be ghosts....And here we are, all of us, abysmally afraid of the light.
>
> [p. 994]

Ghosts rise in present circumstances because we have not dealt with them as we should have in the past. By applying the "log of life," Ibsen vividly demonstrates the

is clear enough to new plot. Already there are indications. But it is the later

time, however, the likelihood of such payment or explanation is the most remote

part of her history she would have given her own illegitimate son. At the same

inconceivably unconventionality. Alving's actions and decisions might have pleased

of the latter's character limits in the son, the mother's characterization in the daughter, do not

characters, creating small and the detail of their expectations. The "ghosts," the re-observance

responsibility to others, and, for this reason, there is the close connection between the

individual's struggle against society and his struggle against this often unconscious

ideals. Ibsen implies that such forces are stored beneath of the dichotomy between the

eventually be brought to the realization that all forces are strong when unrecognized. In

However hard the individual may struggle within or against the social medium, he will

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Oliphaunt--for the sake of others. They are to be happy--this is also merely an

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characters receive. These acknowledgments mark a conflict in moves to an early death of the play-

line and false actions. In many ways, the film also represents the conflict and driven of the

well as the irresponsibility of action: it but at that very moment when the wishes to leave the

of the orphanage, built with her husband's money, symbolizes the hypocrisy in her image, as

in exercising her responsibility to herself and neglects her responsibility to others. The burning

scene is the lack of control the mother and son have over their situation, the lack of control they seem to have over any situation in their lives. The "ghosts" that Mrs. Alving speaks of to Oswald in the last act include the beliefs that there is some honour even in the most basic associations between people, that action can produce progress, that social supremacy is absolute and unable to be challenged. Another "ghost of belief" is Mrs. Alving's own belief that she is free from outmoded ideas. It takes her son's honesty as well as his disease to show how hypocrisy plays a part in individual actions. Mrs. Alving is genuinely shocked at Oswald's lack of feeling toward his father. She asks him, "Surely a child ought to love his father in spite of all?"

> Oswald: What if the child has nothing to thank his father for? Never knew him? You don't really believe in this old superstition still, do you? And you so enlightened in other ways?
> Mrs. Alving: You call that mere superstition. . .!
> Oswald: Yes, surely you realize that, Mother. It's simply one of those ideas that get around and. . .
> Mrs. Alving: Ghosts!
> *
> Oswald. . .then you don't love me either.
> *
> Oswald: ...I also know how fond you are of me. And that's something I must be grateful to you for. And you can also be extremely useful to me, now that I'm a sick man.
>
> [p. 416]

In such severing of the common ties among people, Ibsen shows how self-deception--about love, help and duty--is the means by which a horrid situation is made manifest. "Everything is ghosts."

In Ghosts, self-deception typifies the degeneration of man in the context of his social environment; attempts to overcome difficulties of the past and reach new heights in lives and ideas are undercut by the impulsiveness of human nature. In a pencilled note, Ibsen observed in his early modelling of the play, "The key note must be: the luxuriant growth of our culture, in literature, art, etc.--and by way of contrast: the whole of mankind on the wrong track."[10] While we do see how man can realize that he is on the wrong track in this play, Ibsen's statement can also imply that much of the failings in human lives go unrecognized by their authors. Such a

of feeling toward her father. She asks him, "Surely a child ought to love his father in spite of all?"

Oswald: What if the child has nothing to thank his father for? Never knew him?
You don't really believe in this old superstition still, do you? And *you* so enlightened in other ways?

Mrs. Alving: *You* call that mere superstition . . .

Oswald: Yes, surely *you* realize that, Mother. It's simply one of those ideas that got around and . . .

Mrs. Alving: (Quietly)

. . . . . .

Oswald: . . . then *you don't* love me either.

. . . . . .

Oswald: . . . I also know how fond *you* are of me. And that's something I must be grateful to *you* for. And *you* can also be extremely useful to me, now that I'm a sick man.

(p. 41)

also imply that much of the training in human lives to manipulated by their authors. Such a we do see how *men* motivate that is on the wrestrack in this play. Ibsen's treatment can literature, etc., etc.—and by way of contrast the whole of meaning on the wrestrack."[10] While his early mobility of the play. "The key role must be the important growth of our culture, by there are weakness by the implications of human nature. In a practical sort. Ibsen observed in an attempt: attempts to overcome difficulties of the pen and teach new heights in lives and

In Ghosts, self-deception applies the displacement of men in the context of his social spouse."

pain and duty—it's the means by which a poetic situation is made manifest. "Everything is in such tapestry of the common ties [unsympathetic lines shows how self-deception about [ov-

lack of self-awareness, which was gradual in A Doll's House and more sudden in Ghosts, is shown in The Wild Duck, where Ibsen concentrates on that "complication of what is inherited and habitual" (quoted above, note 1) which complicates man's life because it produces actions and thoughts which are so habitual that they preclude examination by their actors. In other words, Ibsen turns to the analysis of the individual who cannot escape from his place in society because he never overcomes his own self-deception. He is willingly and willfully deceived. The irony in this play is derived from such stasis, for now there is less of an emphasis on the conflict between an individual's goals and the products of his actions than between an individual's goals and their interference with others' intentions. Purpose conflicts with purpose; action belittles intent. In Ghosts, characters suffer for misdeeds, misunderstandings; in The Wild Duck, Ibsen shows that men need not suffer if they do not recognize that they are living a lie. It is not social standards which oppress men, but men's interpretations of the implications of any breaks with decorum. Even the most violent action--a death--cannot remove the characters in The Wild Duck from their self-accepted mode of conduct; they are trapped by consent and self-absorption and do not know Mrs. Alving's horror at the enduring strength of instinct over duty.

Hjalmar is described by Ibsen (in early sketches of the play) as "the son with the wasted talents."[11] Such a character is common enough in Ibsen's own plays and in plays of other dramatists (especially Chekhov) because the character can be the focal point for the balance between oppression and self-defeat. Here, however, we see that Hjalmar's oppression is itself self-imposed, for Ibsen points out that, for Hjalmar, "feelings of piety towards his parents holds him, the family shame oppresses him."[12] Hjalmar's difficulty is not so clearly one of strong conflict, however, for we do get a sense that ambivalence and stasis may be comfortable for him, but certainly both shame and love play a great part in the way he functions in life. In surroundings which are not his own, his sense of shame overwhelms him and restricts his normal outpourings of feeling. For example, in the first act, he attempts to overlook the consequences of his life in order to seem more sophisticated at Werle's party. His shame and insecurity are so strong that he even ignores his own father, who has inadvertently intruded on

lack of self-awareness, which was ironical in *A Doll's House* and more modest in *Ghosts*. It shows in *The Wild Duck*, where Ibsen concentrates on the complexities of what is impressive and habitual" (quoted above, note 1) which complicates man's life because it produces actions and thoughts which are so habitual that they preclude examination by their actors. In other words, Ibsen turns to the analysis of the individual who cannot escape from his place in society because he never overcomes his own self-deception. He is willingly and willfully deceived. The irony in this play is derived from such traits, for now there is less of an emphasis on the conflict between an individual's ideals and the products of his actions than between an individual's ideals and their interference with others' interests. Purpose conflicts with purpose, action pollutes intent. In *Ghosts*, characters suffer for mistakes, misunderstandings, or the wills of others, but in *The Wild Duck* Ibsen shows that man need not suffer if only he will recognize that they are living a lie. It is not societal standards which frighten men, but man's interpretations of the implications of any **beauty** with **decorum**. Even the most virulent action—a death—cannot remove the characters in *The Wild Duck* from their self-occupied mode of conduct; they are trapped by custom and self-absorption and do not know Mrs. Alving's horror at the sublimity of her self-sacrifice or Dr. Stockmann's satisfaction in his moral victory.

Bjalmar is described by Ibsen in early sketches of the play as "the son with the warm talents."[11] Such a character is common enough in Ibsen's own plays and in plays of other playwrights (especially Chekhov) because the character can be the focal point for the balance between dedication and self-deceit. Here, however, we see that Bjalmar's opportunism is truly self-centered, for Ibsen points out that, for Bjalmar, "nobility of piety towards his parents holds him, the family shame oppresses him."[12] Bjalmar's sensitivity is not so clearly one of strong conflict. However, for we do get a sense that ambivalence and stasis may be constructive to man, but constantly both shame and love play a great part in the way he functions in life. In artistic terms which are not his own, but years of shame overwhelms him and restrains his normal compensations of testing. For example, in the first act, he struggles to overlook the

the party. Gregers, in the first frenzy of indignation at the circumstances for the Ekdals' fall, upbraids Hjalmar: "...you stood there and denied that you knew him!" Hjalmar [*in an urgent whisper*]: "How could I. . ." Gregers: ". . .acknowledge your own father?" (TWD: p. 142). Hjalmar's thankfulness of the present conflicts with and conflates his shame of the past, thus producing a type of hypocrisy which is especially distasteful to Ibsen because it precludes self-knowledge. Furthermore, Hjalmar's sense of inadequacy, because it is consistently self-imposed, sheds light on the weakness of his moral character. Because he professes little self-worth, he is easily manipulated and intimidated, but it is important to note that he is not a comic character. In a letter to the manager of the Kristiania Theatre (14 November 1884), Ibsen observes of Hjalmar's character that "his soulfulness is genuine, his moodiness beautiful in its way, not a trace of affectation."[18] This despite the fact that his shame is also annoyingly melodramatic.

As much as Hjalmar enjoys playing the martyr, he never stops making predictions about the great future in store for him, the great accomplishments he will achieve. In asserting the likelihood of his future prosperity and the strength of his present aspirations, Hjalmar perpetuates both others' deception and his own comfortably tentative state. Other characters make his deception comfortable by flattering and appeasing him; his wife (and Werle's former mistress) Gina takes over the photographic details and leaves her husband to his idle musings. All is not as comfortable as he would wish, however, for his indulgent shame and despair feed Greger's enthusiasm for supposedly setting right the details of others' lives, a consequence which brings about the destruction of Hjalmar's daughter, whose love for her father also feeds his indulgence. Ibsen may be implying that, in an indirect way, self-indulgent behaviour, no less than self-indulgent attitudes, ruin one, just as they complicate one's own life. However, Hjalmar's self-indulgence is most clearly seen in his high opinions of his ability to re-establish his father's position in society, and this self-indulgence is complicated the most by the response which it elicits from others. When Gregers rents a room in the Ekdal's house, Hjalmar considers the extra income a means for increased independence. Even when Gina tells him that agreeing to Gregers's tenancy might endanger Old Ekdal's job for Werle, Hjalmar cannot be dissuaded, although his talk is idle: "Isn't it rather humiliating for a man like me to see his

the party. Dwyer, in the first frenzy of indignation at the circumstances the Embassy will
[illegible] "You stood there and denied that you knew him." Hylmar (in an injured
whisper): "I did not deny knowledge, only acquaintance." Dwyer: "How could I ... [illegible]
mutter)." Hylmar's [illegible] (EMD: p. 140). Hylmar's
cheerfulness of temperament conflicts with and conditions his absence of character, thus producing a
type of pathos which is especially distressful to those because it penetrates self-knowledge.
Hylmar's sense of inadequacy, because it is constantly self-imposed, stands
right on the watchers of his moral character. Because he possesses little self-worth, he is easily
manipulated and intimidated, but it is important to note that he is not a comic character. In a
letter to the author of The Existentialists (14 November 1984), Shaw observes of Hylmar's
character that "his sensitiveness to feminine, his moodiness [illegible] in no way are a trace of
effeminacy."[12] This description of Hylmar is also profoundly ambivalent:

> As much as Hylmar embodies the tragic, he never stops manifesting [illegible] about
> the true forms in store for him, the great accomplishments he will achieve. In associating the
> [illegible] of his inner productivity and the activity of his present vocation, Hylmar
> [illegible] pork: where, despite and his own counterproductive inertia were. Other characters
> make his description considerably [illegible] and apparently him with (and Wolfe [illegible]
> [illegible]) time takes over [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

grey-haired father being treated like an outcast? But soon we shall know what time in its fullness will bring...As truly as I have a mission in life, so shall I fulfill it!" (p. 178).

Hjalmar does not realise that his friend Gregers also feels that he has a mission in life to fulfill, and Hjalmar's optimism about his hopes, however unbased, contrasts with Gregers's own self-indulgent mission. Gregers thinks of the Ekdal family as the "poor Ekdals" (p. 144), and when he is told the story of the wild duck that was wounded by the hunter's shot and saved from its own self-determined death, he cannot stop himself from comparing the Ekdal ruin to that which was imminent for the wild duck. Of course, he also intends to save the family; he tells Hjalmar, " I'll see we get you up again." Hjalmar protests, assuring his friend that "apart from feeling naturally rather depressed, I am as well as any man could wish."

> Gregers: The very fact that you are, also comes from the poison.
> *
> Hjalmar: ...this place doesn't smell like a swamp, as you keep saying. I know it's only the humble home of a poor photographer of modest means....But I am an inventor, you know. . . and a breadwinner too. That's what keeps me above all these petty things.--Ah! Here they are with the lunch.
> [pp. 189, 190]

Ibsen takes care to make Hjalmar state specifically that he does not wish to be "saved"; Hjalmar has this attitude not because he is concerned about his friend's meddling, but because he simply does not see any need to be saved. It is ironic that just at that point when his friend is so determined to meddle with his life, Hjalmar is absorbed in thought of his lunch. A character's self-absorption is most clearly seen in the demand for such fundamental satisfaction.

Ibsen uses the differing viewpoints of Gregers and Hjalmar to sustain his examination of what constitutes happiness, what preserves lives and relationships among people. While Ibsen does attack self-deception and absorption in other plays, most notably in Ghosts, in The Wild Duck, he fights against deception at the same time that he argues for its preservation. Gregers deceives himself in thinking that he is bound to save his friend from a wronged life, to rebuild his friend's marriage in the light of truth and not hypocrisy; Hjalmar deceives himself by being indulgent. The difference between the men lies in the way they each preserve and continue their

from feeling eventually rather depressed, I am as well as any man could wish."

(His Majesty, p. 171) one we [sic] do not [sic] often [sic]." Hilmar [sic] eventually [sic] [sic] that "apart

than which was imminent for the wild duck. Of course, he also managed to save the family by

from his own self-destructive death, by cannot stop himself from completely the Kindel twin

and when he is told the story of the wild duck that was wounded by the hunter's shot and saved

two self-immolent women: Gregers chides of the Ekdal family as the "poor Kindels" (p. 144).

Hjalmar does not realize that his friend Gregers also feels that he has a mission in life to

fulfill, and Hjalmar's optimism about his hopes, however ephemeral, contrasts with Gregers's

two attacks on Hjalmar's character. Gregers chides Hjalmar for his pleasure-seeking. Gregers

Duck, he fights vigorously at the same time that he argues for its preservation. Gregers

pursuit of truth in order to remain a strong life to remain

Hjalmar is the only character who is consistently portrayed as a weak person throughout the play. The difference between the two men lies in the way Hjalmar chooses to respond to his problems. Hjalmar chooses to escape from reality by living in a fantasy world, whereas Gregers chooses to confront reality head-on. Hjalmar chooses to escape from reality by living in a fantasy world, whereas Gregers chooses to confront reality head-on.

Hjalmar's escape from reality is not a conscious decision. He is not aware that he is escaping from reality. He is not aware that he is escaping from reality. He is not aware that he is escaping from reality

expectations when faced with a conflict. Hjalmar is, for the most part, happy before Gregers's meddling, though Gregers does not see this. He tells Werle, the man who caused such injury to be inflicted on the Ekdals, "...there he sits, so tremendously trusting and innocent, in the midst of deceit, living under the same roof with a woman like that and not knowing that what he calls his home is built on a lie" (p. 150). Hjalmar does not suffer for his self-deception, however. Within his house there is love, and expectation, with only the slightest bit of melancholy, until the intrusion of Gregers.

If any comparisons can be made between the wild duck and Hjalmar, we need not look at the instances of the duck's wounding, but at the significance of its survival in a new and theoretically "unnatural" environment. Upon first showing the bird and its attic home to Gregers, Hjalmar observes, "it's been so long there now that it's forgotten what real wild life is like. And that's all that counts" (p. 170). Here, expectations can be modified by a change in environment; we do not want what we cannot know. However, Gregers, while observing the present comfort of the bird's life and the truth of Hjalmar's statement, notes that the bird will be fine "so long as it never catches sight of sea and sky." He supposes that the bird would be driven to achieve that which he does not yet have, and in holding such a supposition he overestimates man's willingness to do away with deception. In notes to the play, Ibsen calls Gregers "the sybarite, [who] enjoys an aesthetic indignation at poverty and misery" [14] which is by no means practical. When Hjalmar learns of his wife's affair, he does not attempt to build a stronger marriage based on truth, as Gregers thinks he should. Instead, Hjalmar takes up the most comfortable position which is, in this case, one of angry, hurt withdrawal. The tranquility of the family life is destroyed, and, ultimately, Hjalmar's beloved Hedvig will also be destroyed by that pronouncement and response to truth which destroys Hjalmar's happiness. We get the sense that in life, it is really only pretence that keeps us going; Relling says as much: "...the life-lie. You see, the life-lie is the stimulating principle" (p. 226).

Self-inititative perpetuates expectations; others' initiative's destroy them. As much of an emphasis on individual intent as there is in The Wild Duck, there are still lingering traces of Ibsen's concern with the helplessness that some characters have; we still see the effects of "what

the intrusion of Dreyer.

Many comparisons can be made between the wild duck and Hjalmar; we need not look at

Within his home there is love, and expectation, with only the slightest bit of melancholy small-
ness to indicate that some unwanted part of us will go the ashes of "what
Ilbert's concern with the relationship between adjustment and alienation is still operating there. As
Ilbert explains in The Wild Duck*, there are still liberating forces in*

Both institutions participate in adjustment; each, in its distinctive way, destroys them. As much of an
says as much: "...the life-lie. You see, the life-lie is the illumination[structure]," p. 230).

typhoons. We do the same thing in life, it is really only pleasure that helps us fight [selling]
be destroyed by their [unconscious] and [desire to live], which destroys Hjalmar's
[sanity] of the family like it destroyed with disastrously Hjalmar's beloved Daring will also
most comfortable position which is in this case, one of anger, but withdrawal. The
struggle marriage based on truth, as Dreyer thinks he should [convey] Hjalmar [case of the
ly no moral position. When Hjalmar learns of his wife's affair, he does not attempt to [hold a
Dreyer "the [photo|[photographic] realistic tradition at[over]y and[ninety]," [4] which is
overstatement man's willingness to do away with deception. In order to the play [does exist
driven to realize that which he does not. We have, and to [fight] with a [opposition to
be like "an [old as it [were certain style] of use and old." He [objects] that the bird would be
pleasant caution of the [magic tile and the study of Hjalmar's [weapon], since that the bird will
anticipation], we do not want what we cannot have. However, Dreyer, while observing the
life: "And that's all that counts" (p. 170). Here [characteristic] can be [modified] by a change in
Dreyer, Hjalmar observes, "It's [one] to [[create] now that it's [origin] when real wild life is
[basically] "unnatural" environment. Upon first showing the bird and its wife [one to
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is inherited and what is habitual." Hedvig's eye problems, inherited from her father, point to an emphasis on physical corruption reflecting moral or social corruption, examples of which were seen in Ghosts. Ibsen does not cease to draw on helplessness, inheritance, and disease in plays which examine the specific maintenance of expectations, even though the power of social and moral ideas is not primary. In a later play like Hedda Gabler, we see how Ibsen combines indulgence which perpetuates the characters' expectations of themselves and others, as in The Wild Duck, with the realization of the implications of one's expectations, as in somewhat earlier plays like Ghosts, or even A Doll's House. The open-endedness of earlier plays carries over into Hedda Gabler, although complications between one individual's intent and that of another leave the conclusion of the play somewhat ambiguous. Is Hedda's death the result of her realization that all her expectations are meaningless? Or is she herself trying to complete one courageous act in recompense for the defeats? We cannot be sure, nor does Ibsen really want us to be sure in our estimation of Hedda's worth and the value of her actions. The ironic treatment of progress, the conflict between duty and instinct, the imposition of social standards, biological consequences, and the barriers that man imposes on his life all tie this play to the others already mentioned. As a result, the various conflicts against which some of the characters struggle show Ibsen's own attempt to illustrate how the problems in life need not be credited only to one's expectation, or those expectations which others have, or those exterior forces over which one has no control. In this sense, Hedda Gabler is an extension of what was implicit in The Wild Duck: initiatives and the conflicts among them.

Certainly the most obvious cause of Hedda's failed expectations is her own lack of initiative, her own failure to take control of her life, and yet this cause is rooted in inhibitions which were introduced into her character by society. She is like Nora in that her function in society is in opposition to her instinct, except Hedda is much more of a rebellious character. She is a product of society, and yet she despises society. We can see the complication in her life by observing the play's title: Hedda Gabler, not "Mrs. Hedda Tesman," as it says in the dramatis personae. Ibsen explained the cause for such a distinction in a letter to Count Moritz Prozor, dated 4 December 1890: "I intended to indicate thereby that as a personality she is to regarded

dated 4 December 1980: "I intended to indicate therapy that as a personality she is to separate
[illegible]. Dean explained the cause for such a distinction in a letter to Claire Moore Dworkin
by observing the play's title [illegible] not "Mrs. Hedda Tesman," as it says in the dramatis
personae in Ibsen. Ibsen does not seem to draw on Sophoclean intertextuality, and discuss in play
with examine the specific maintenance of subsistence, even though the power of social sec-
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over into Hedda Gabler, although complications between one individual's intent and that
individual's perception of the play somewhat ambiguous. Is Hedda's death the result of her
realization that all her expectations are meaningless? Or is the pistol shot going to complete our
contemplation of the dilemma? My answer is no, nor does Ibsen really want us
to be more in the existence of Hedda's world and the value of her actions. The [illegible] tension
of problem, the conflict between duty and instinct, the imposition of social standards
[illegible] concerning, and the patterns that mean [illegible] his life all are this play to the
[illegible] in The Wild Duck, intrinsic and the conflicts surrounding.

Certainly the most obvious cause of Hedda's failed expectations is her own lack of
initiative, her own failure to take control of her life, and/or this cause is rooted in institutions
which were introduced into her character by society. She is like Nora in that her function in
society is to objectify herself as a beautiful woman. Hedda is much more of a rebellious character
than Nora in Ibsen's A Doll's House, for she rejects society. We can see the complication in her life
as a product of society, not as the original society. We can see the complication in her life

rather as her father's daughter than as her husband's wife." He explains further that his purpose in the play was "to depict human beings, their humours and their destinies, against a background of certain operative conditions."[15] "Humours and destinies" are primary, though they are qualified by conditions, attitudes, and judgements without which the characters cannot live.

Ibsen implies that Hedda's thoughts and actions need to be set against her view of marriage and her concern for propriety. With regard to her marriage, Hedda's responses to Tesman reveal that she thinks him a simple-minded man who believes the best but who does not know very much about human nature; in Dr. Brack's words, Tesman is "a credulous soul" (HG: p. 240). She has very little respect for him, especially when he is set against what she thinks is her ideal man, Ejlert Lovborg. Marriage for Hedda is undertaken more by necessity than by desire; with it, she follows the patterns of accepted practise. In a conversation with Dr. Brack, she compares life to a train journey, marriage to a compartment on this train. To her, the journey seems like a long one, and so Brack tells her, "Well, then you jump out. And move around a little bit, my lady."

> Hedda: I'll never jump out.
> Brack: Are you quite sure?
> Hedda: Yes. Because there is always someone who'll...
> Brack: [*laughing*] ...Who'll look at your legs, you mean?
>
> [p. 208]

She is held back by the morality of the day, as much as by her own misgivings. As a lady, she would never "show her legs"; as an individual, she would never go off the track. Preservation of the norm is all, although she rebels against such preservation because she is profoundly bored and frustrated by it.

Although Hedda does not feel that she can go against the norm in important matters such as marriage, she does find small ways to show her distaste with her husband, her marriage, and her lack of occupation. Half-agreeing to go along with Brack's talk of developing a "three-some" is one way she occupies her time; making fun of Miss Tesman's hat and burrowing for details of

rejoinder as Jan Brabyr's daughter than as her husband's wife." He explains further that his problem is in the play was "to depict human beings, their passions and their destinies, against a background of certain operative conditions."[15] "Passions and destinies" are primarily thought; they are qualified by conditions, attitudes, and judgments without which the characters cannot live.

These implies that Hedda's thoughts and actions need to be an aspect of her view of marriage and her concern for propriety. With regard to her marriage, Hedda's responses to Tesman reveal that she thinks him a simple minded man who believes the best for her who does not know very much about human nature. In De Beauvoir's words, Tesman is "a credulous soul" (HD p. 340). She has very little respect for him, especially when he is not aware that she thinks it be best when [illegible] Tesman's bravery, marriage for Hedda is contemptible and he is not aware of it. She follows the patterns of acceptable behavior in a conservative way. Tesman, the narrator points out, is a simple man who believes the best for his wife. To her, marriage is a contemptible institution and she

Mrs. Elvsted's affair are other ways. A great part of Hedda's character is a love for recklessness, a hint of danger; her gun-play is symbolic both of her desire to break through the barriers around her and her anger at not breaking through them. In action previous to the play, she threatened to shoot Lovborg when Mrs. Elvsted, not suspecting the identity of Lovborg's "other woman," tells the story to Hedda, Hedda says, "Oh, rubbish! People don't have such things here!" (p. 195). Suitably enough, the second act opens with a pistol shot, for Hedda is practising with her pistols and takes aim at Dr. Brack ("Oh, I just stand here and shoot into the blue" (p. 208)). Her constant allusions to boredom, both in speech and in action, confirm Ibsen's interest in such frenzy when he created her character: "Hedda's desperation is a conviction that life must offer so many possibilities of happiness, but that she can't catch sight of them. It is the want of a goal in life that torments her."[16] She, of course, does not see marriage or motherhood as a "goal in life"; the mere mention of anything having to do with her impending motherhood repulses her. When Dr. Brack tells her that she will have "a new responsibility," anger rises in her, and she tells him, "I've often thought there's only one thing in the world I'm good at / / ...boring myself to death" (p. 218). In this comment, there may be an admission that her desperation is somewhat self-imposed. She is bored, but she does not want to "show her legs." Instead, she wallows in feelings of disgust at the lack of control she has over her life and her body.

Hedda responds to the lack of control she feels by attempting to take control of the lives of others; such an attempt does away with her boredom for a while and eliminates its source: anger, frustration. Like Gregers, she feels the urge to meddle with others' lives, but, unlike him, she recognizes the damage that she is doing and does it anyway. Having control over another justified Torvald's existence in A Doll's House. Similarly, such control justifies Hedda's existence, and even Mrs. Elvsted's existence. Mrs. Elvsted tells Hedda about Lovborg's reform, "Oh, it just happened, bit by bit I got a sort of control over him. / / ...he's made me into a sort of real person" (p. 194). Even Miss Tesman feels the need for someone to control, look after, pin her hopes upon. After her sister's death, she prepares to look for "some poor invalid or another who needs some care and attention" because she "needs to have someone to live for" (p. 258). Attempting to seize control over Lovborg is also an expression of Hedda's jealous contempt of

Maddie responds to the lack of control she has over her life and her body.

feelings of disgust or the lack of control she has over her life and her body.

self-improve. She is bored, but she does not want to "throw her legs," instead she watches to [illegible]. In this moment, there may be an admission that her desperation to commun[illegible]. "I've often thought there's only one thing in the world I'm good at \ \ ...having my heart to death." [illegible] there will be a "a new responsibility," when there is no [illegible] this will be her life. Maddie's inner monologue participates in with her impending motherhood regrets her. When Dr. [illegible] tells her that she will have to [illegible] that she will not be [illegible] that she [illegible] that [illegible] that [illegible] that

Mrs. Elvsted, though we cannot discount her idealization of Lovborg's character in such an act. The history of her relationship with him shows this continual means of justifying her own life and actions through him. He used to confess all things to her, and she enjoyed and believed in the ideals he expounded to her. She admits that part of his attraction for her was being one who desired "to find out about a world that.../ / she isn't supposed to know anything about" (p. 228). Since she never had the courage to follow his plans and ideals--since she even lacked the courage to go away with him one night--she tends to put her desires into idealization of him. When she sends Lovborg off to the party-- and away from Mrs. Elvsted--and speaks of him "with vine leaves in his hair. Flushed and confident," she does so with confidence and happiness of her own: "For once in my life I want to feel that I control a human destiny" (p. 230). Indeed, she has no such control, nor do her idealizations have any basis. Hedda's misfortune is that she does not recognize that others will let themselves be controlled when they are unable to control their own lives; lack of courage is more common than she likes to believe.

Ibsen stresses the lack of courage in Hedda's character to show how delusion, weakness of character, and lack of resolve are inherently self-destructive, even though we know that Hedda must combat attitudes and values in society. He does not condemn Hedda for either her desperation or her impulsive actions, though Hedda does put so much of her feelings of self-worth into her idealization of Lovborg that she is destroyed when she learns the truth of his character. Ibsen observes of Hedda that "one marries Tesman, but one occupies one's imagination with Ejlert Lovborg....Mrs. Elvsted 'labours for his moral regeneration.' For Hedda he is the subject of fearful, alluring fantasies. In real life she hasn't the courage to take part in such things."[17] Her idealization of Lovborg blinds Hedda to a good many shortcomings in his character; he writes a book about "the moral doctrine of the future" and loses the manuscript on the evening of his escapade in the whorehouse. He is as easily influenced by Mrs. Elvsted as he is by Hedda. Ibsen observes that Lovborg's "desperation lies in the fact that he wants to control the world but cannot control himself."[18] Hedda's own frustration and desire for courage drive her on, and they contrast with her desire to drive Lovborg into dissipation. She seems to destroy him because she is able to influence him; she burns the manuscript to destroy Mrs. Elvsted, yet

him because she is able to influence him: she burns the manuscript to destroy Mr. Elwood, not only, and they contrast with her desire to drive Lovborg into despair. She seems to destroy herself because she cannot control herself." [9] Hedda's own frustration and desire for mastery drive her to manipulate Lovborg's "desperation" in the hope that he will restore the mastery of his work through him. He tried to control all things to her, and she enjoyed and believed in the illusion of her relationship with him shows this control means of fortifying her own life. Elevated, though as cause discussion per identification of Lovborg's character in such as an

fails to do so. Instead of recognizing what is to come, Hedda keeps overestimating the courage of Lovborg; because she lacks courage, she wants him to die courageously. Brack delays telling Hedda about Lovborg's death, and she, thinking that Lovborg has shot himself in the breast, reflects that his death is a "release" for her: "It's a liberation to know that an act of spontaneous courage is yet possible in this world. An act that has something of conditional beauty" (p. 262). All thoughts of "spontaneous courage" are driven away by the knowledge that Lovborg shot himself in the abdomen and died in a brothel. An act of "conditional beauty" might have served as the justification of her life; instead, she shoots herself with the other pistol. It is perhaps significant that of the set of two pistols, Lovborg uses one, Hedda the other; Lovborg's book about the development of male-female companionship might thus be realized in their suicide marriage. And yet, as Dr. Brack says, "People don't do such things" (p. 268), or are not meant to do such things. Lack of courage, if nothing else, would stop them from taking even that action.

From this line, it appears that Brack may have been idealizing Hedda himself, and it is worth considering whether her death is a final attempt to seize control, a final realization that she lacks control, or perhaps her death is indeed "an act of conditional beauty" (Hedda, unlike Lovborg, succeeds in shooting herself in the temple). Perhaps her death is a combination of these three conditions--neither something terribly heroic nor something pitiful. Nothing in Ibsen's portrait of the modern world can be considered undeniably heroic, and we cannot discount the value of Hedda's death in the "farce" which she believes her life to be. As a character who makes "great demands on life and happiness," [19] she is especially pained by ignorance or underestimation of the things in which she believes; she is sensitive to the ironies of the circumstances in which she finds herself. She is like some of Ibsen's other characters in that, when all the significances in her life become jumbled, she finds herself face-to-face with that very thing which destroyed all her expectations. Nora, in a lesser way, realizes that cause of her trouble; Mrs. Alving meets the horror of her past actions. Hedvig in The Wild Duck may be the only character in that play who has her ideals, and mostly her love, called into question by the actions of others. Hedda, however, sees the meaninglessness of her life played against the ridiculousness of others' behaviour. When Mrs. Elvsted and Tesman attempt to piece together

ignominiousness of others' behaviour. When Iris, Richard and Jeremy attempt to place together only characters in the plot who pay lip service to, and routinely perform, the social rituals of others. Hardly, however, does this meaningfulness of her life playing against the complex plot. A vivid mosaic the points of the pen nature. Implicit in *The Nice Dress* may be the realization of the choice in which the black portrait. The is the scene of Simon's open characters in their "great demands on life and judgment." [19] She is especially pained by Ibbotson in values of Hardie's work is the "force" which the painter put into it to be. As a character who makes Picasso's the modern world can be considered completely heroic, and as cannot discount the crime conditions—namely, something terribly before not something plain. Written in Iran's Iceberg, according to characterization is the simple. Purple Ear death is a combination of them the tragic control, or perhaps her death is indeed "an act of conditional beauty" (Hardie, outline nearly constructed whether her death is a final attempt to seize control a final realization that the destruction of male-female complementarity might thus be realized in their erotic attraction of the Ice collaborator, Tompkins-Jones, Hardie the other) Tompkins pool about as the destruction of her life draws to the ghost herself with the more plural. It is perhaps himself in the epidemic and died in a hospital. An act of "conditional beauty" might be seen in all crowding of "phantasmic courage" are driven away by the knowledge that Tompkins and courage is ambiguous in this world. We actions are accomplished as conditional beauty. (p. 36) reflect the pit death is a "miracle" for her. It's impossible to know that an act of phantasmic Hardie about Tompkins death, and the thinking that Tompkins has about himself to the brave Tompkins pursue the tragic courage, the exact aim to be consequently. Brave delays telling more to do so. Instead of sacrificing what is to come. Hardie looks overattempting the courage of

Lovborg's manuscript, Hedda knows that the farce of her life is reaching an unbearable climax. Lovborg's ideas--Hedda's ideas--are reformed and jumbled by those who neither recognize nor understand them. Ibsen does not offer his audience any solution to the meaning of life; he does not even attempt to clarify those factors which make life more bearable. He merely shows how tenacious, how stubborn, and how desperate man can be.

As Ibsen's characters try to create real situations, feelings, or actions out of their ideals and expectations of life, they find the effort of sustaining the courses of their lives difficult. Ibsen looks at such situations from all angles: Nora anticipates happiness which cannot be realized because she overestimates her husband's regard and power; Mrs. Alving struggles to achieve happiness by obliterating past mistakes and misfortunes; in The Wild Duck, some characters assume that they have happiness, only to discover the falsity of their suppositions; Hedda Gabler demands happiness, but lacks the courage to struggle for or achieve any of her desires. All of Ibsen's characters believe that there ought to be some way to attain happiness, though such a belief is usually denied them by the circumstances of their lives: "The great pity of the world is that so many have nothing to do but to chase after happiness without being able to find it."[20] While Ibsen neither argues that happiness ought or ought not to be sought nor emphasizes the futility of action, he does show why both of these things are part of "the great pity of the world." We are not forcibly driven to tears or laughter by the life he shows us on the stage, but we do sense the irony of man--with his hopes--living among others with their own views of life. Our concentration on one or a few characters reveals Ibsen's skill at bringing out the frustrations and desperation of characters on the verge of revelation (which they can accept or reject). To them, defeat is painfully ironic, even unacceptable. The mundane things will tend to destroy their high expectations, for, as Ibsen points out in notes to the conclusion of Hedda Gabler, "Life is not tragic--Life is ridiculous--And that cannot be borne."[21] Hence the ferocity of their struggles and the horror and shock of their ends.

their struggles and the horror and shock of their ends.

Dobler: "Life is not cheap—Life is infinitely precious. And that cannot be proven."[1] Here is the basis of Dobler's quest. To him, death is certainly ultimate, even unacceptable. The mundane things will serve to reflect. To them, death is certainly ultimate, even unacceptable. The mundane things will serve to illustrate and emphasize the importance of experience on the basis of realization (which they can excite in life. One consequence, or aim or a few characters towards Dobler still is bringing out the fact as to cause the study of man—why his future—living among others with their own views of the world." We are not simply driven to tears or laughter by the life he shows us on the stage, emphasizes the futility of action, he does show why such a phrase as pure or "the final cut and it."[2] While there another writer that playwrights ought or ought not to be taught nor the world is that so many have wanted to do so to close what playwrights without precisely to though such a period is usually devoted when playwrights circumstances citizens live." The ever-hit of Dobler's characters believe that there ought to be some way to attain happiness. All of these characters assume that happiness can be achieved by pursuing the right goals. Hardie Dobler assumes that he can be to struggle for or achieve any of his characters assume that they have happiness only to discover the falsity of their assumptions. Others happiness by deliberately pent mistakes and misfortunes in The Wild Duck, some realized because the characters put purposeful reform and power) but. Already examples to those looks at such situations from all angles. Does misfortune prohibit which cannot be and objectives of life, they find the effort of maintaining the course of their lives difficult.

As these characters try to create real situations, fantasy, or actions out of their input, some attempt to clarify those factors which make life more bearable. He usually shows how even attempts to understand them. Ibsen does not offer his audience any solution to the meaning of life as these people's impulses—Hedda's ideas are influenced and inspired by those with whom sociology and Tesman's manuscript; Hedda knows that the issue of her life is touching an unbearable climax.

2

Anton Chekhov

While Ibsen deals with ironies and ridiculousness of culture, Chekhov tends to concentrate solely on the neuroses of the individual. His concern is with self-destruction, or self-doubt, which does not have easily ascribed causes. Thus on the one hand, we have Ibsen's plays which are carefully organized and plotted to reveal the tensions of the situation, the manifestation of the force which gathers all the characters beneath it, and on the other hand, we have Chekhov's plays which emphasize psychological reality, where there are waves, even tides of humanity, where the drama, itself carefully crafted, ebbs and flows. His plays do not differ from one another to the extent that Ibsen's do, because he probes more deeply into patterns of reaction, because he deals with a progression of isolated movements. In the plays of both men, however, life is seen as something essentially ridiculous, but Chekhov does not emphasize the ridiculousness of all impositions, those of self and those of society, but he sees the ridiculousness of his characters' psychological expression of such impositions. A character's very actions are subordinated to his emotional responses, and so his expectations are destroyed almost in his attempt to sustain a mood. The exterior world reflects the isolation and insubstantiality of characters' lives, and it imposes on them only when the characters summon it to. We have words, protestations, and philosophies which are ironic in relation to the character's stagnated present, and though Chekhov's characters do interact with one another, essentially the conflict in each particular life is that between one desire and another. Causes are implied, glazed over, and the existence of desires and expectations is accepted both by playwright and by his characters. Uncle Vanya, himself disillusioned, recognizes that "When people aren't really alive they live on illusions. It's better than nothing" (UV:p. 87).[1] The question is, of course, what qualifies a character's assertion that he has "no life," and it is on this question that the plays differ.

2

Anton Chekhov

this question that the plays differ.

question is, of course, what qualifies a character's assertion that he has "no life," and it is on "How people really live they live illusion; it's better than nothing" (IX/p.69).[1] *The* by playwright and by his characters. Uncle Vanya, himself diminished, recognizes that Clames are implied elsewhere, and the existence of desires and expectations is accepted but neither, essentially the conflict in each character like it that *between* one desire and another the character's deepened presence, and though Chekhov's characters do interact with one mention it to. We have words, protestations, and philosophies which are ironic in relation to and importantly of characters' lives, and it happens on them only when the characters are destroyed almost in his attempt to mutate a mood. The narrator would reflect the narrator Chekhov's early stories are mismatched to his emotional responses, and to his expectations the richness/meanness of his characters' psychological expression of such impositions. A complexity the relationships of all impositions; there is talk and there is society, but as men both men. However, life is seen as something essentially ridiculous; for Chekhov does not pretense of reaction, however be dealt with a proliferation of isolated movements. In the plays of satire from one another to the extent that theme's *de*. because he precise move deeply into choice of humanity, where the drama, itself inexactly created, slide and flows. His plays do not we have Chekhov's plays which emphasize independent reality where there are waves, even manipulations of the tones which gather all the characters beneath it, and in the other hand plays which are carefully organized and plotted to reveal the tensions of the situation, the self-doubt, which does not have easily resolved causes. Thus on the one hand, we have those concentrates solely on the emotions of the individual. His success is with self-destruction, so

While these deals with ironies and ridiculousness of motive, Chekhov tends to

In concentrating on psychological reality in his major plays, Chekhov analyzes problems of knowledge, learning, work, culture, and boredom, the last of which ultimately ties these problems and the lives of the characters together. Sonya, in Uncle Vanya, tells Elena Andreyevna, "You're bored, you don't know what to do with yourself and boredom and idleness are infectious" (p. 44). Each analysis is tempered by humorous or comic elements, by appeals to hope and a belief in a brighter future, if not for the characters themselves, then for their children and descendants. Each hope is also tempered by nihilism, for some of the characters come to realize that what seems important now will be proven, with the passage of time, to be ridiculous, meaningless, ultimately forgotten. Such nihilism can beget sorrow, despair, or the ever-present boredom, and so the cycle of men's lives continues. In The Cherry Orchard, Lopakhin tells Ranevskaya about a funny play he has seen. She observes, "I don't suppose it was a bit funny. You people shouldn't go and see plays, you should try watching your own performances instead. What drab lives you all lead and what a lot of rubbish you talk!" (TCO: p. 167). Her comments are ironic, since many of Chekhov's characters do look at their lives too often, and yet she herself has not examined her life in the way in which she should. Still, we see that even within the interior life of the play, comedy and reality are not mutually exclusive. Life in Chekhov's plays is both beautiful and oppressive; it is burdensome, in spite of the fact that Chekhov is not the black-weeded pessimist that some thought he was. While characters attempt to relieve their burden and strive to know why they suffer, or persevere, the more knowledge they obtain, the more ignorant they become. Yet this humour is always part of the suffering, and the comic aspects of Chekhov's plays actually give characters more dignity, because they outline their roles as human beings.

In some of the earlier full length plays, Chekhov does not probe the depths of humour and irony in the human condition, though he does stress the oppressiveness of lives which are full of self-imposed desperation and wasted talent. Again, there is more emphasis on a character's response to a situation than to any action completed against it. He describes that sort of self-destruction instigated by lack of occupation, little incentive, and feelings of superfluousness and pride. In The Sea Gull, for example, Chekhov exploits his characters'

In conventional or psychological reality in his major plays, Chekhov creates characters who are unheroic, unsuccessful, and sometimes even boring. Yet this is not because they outline their roles as human beings.

In some of the earlier full-length plays, Chekhov does not probe the depths of human and self-imposed isolation, though he does stress the obliviousness of lives which are full of self-destruction motivated by lack of occupation, little incentive, and feelings of inadequacy to relate to situation than to any action completed against it. He describes that sort of Anton Chekhov. "Write honestly, you don't know what to do with journals and boredom and idleness and laziness." (p. 94). Each analysis is tempered by humorous or comic elements, by efforts to live and a belief in a brighter future. It not for the characters themselves, then for their children and descendants. Each hope is also tempered by nihilism, for some of the characters come to realize that what seems important now will be proven, with the passage of time, to be relationships meaningless, ultimately unknown. Each civilization can pass away, deprive, or the post-Bronze Age boredom, and so the cycle of man's lives continues. In The Cherry Orchard, Lopakhin tells Ranevskaya about a humanplay he has seen. He observes, "I don't suppose it was to be funny. You people should go and see plays. You should try watching your own [CE2], p. 167). His comments are ironic, since many of Chekhov's characters do look at their lives too personnaissance himself. What helps Ivan feel and what a lot of rubbish you talk!" (CE2), p. a bit funny. You people should go and see plays. You should try watching your own lives even while the interior life of the play, comedy and reality are not incompatibly exclusive often, and yet the person does not experience life in the way in which the should still, we do. Life in Chekhov's plays is both beautiful and oppressive; it is burdensome, in spite of the fact true Chekhov is not the black-veiled pessimist that some thought he was. While characters struggle to relate their bodies and minds to know why they suffer or persevere, the more knowledge they obtain, the more ignorance they become. Yet this in most is always part of the

attitudes toward the undertaking of plans, but, as always, discussion takes precedence over action. In a letter to Suvorin, Chekhov talks about his attitude towards his then unfinished play: "It's a comedy with...a lot of talk about literature, little action, and a hunderweight and a half of love" (21 October 1895).[2] In fact, it is through the characters' talk of literature that we discover some of the common themes of Chekhov's drama. Trigorin, a writer and guest of Arkadina, the actress, is a figure idealized by the rest of the inhabitants because he has the ability to create things; he presses beyond the boundary of ideas and suppositions. Arkadina has a genuine need to capture him because, as a woman who is primarily concerned with appearances, she needs to control a creator so that she can formulate things on her own. Nina tends to idealize the writer, as does the doctor Dorin; Treplev, Arkadina's son, tends to resent his presence. Trigorin, however, is baffled and often disturbed by their esteem, for he finds that the act of writing brings on feelings of despair and failure. Thus we have a character who is used by others as a symbol of their own aspirations, but whose attempts at self-expression are potentially self-destructive for himself. Such oppression has no real cause; it simply exists. Chekhov does point out the conflict between one's own desires and needs and others' expectations of the product of these desires and needs. Nina, full of admiration for Treplev's talent, tells him, "If you knew how I envy you. People's lives work out so differently. Some barely drag out their days in drab obscurity. They're all alike and all miserable. But others, you for instance...have fascinating, brilliant lives full of meaning" (TSG: p. 254). She deludes herself and does not know that he, too, feels trapped within his own "dull, obscure existence"; for his frankness cannot dispel her romanticized notions, so that when he tells her, "I have no rest from myself, and I feel that I am consuming my own life," Nina only uses such a statement to perpetuate her own ideas. Insularity is the custom in Chekhov's plays, and Chekhov shows how much it influences the ways in which one views one's own life and the ways in which others views others' lives.

In such conflicting circumstances, with characters confused even about their own expectations, they may question the degree to which their lives are their own. Immersed in their own lives, they may grow confused about the level of control they have in their lives, and

their own lives: they walk down confused about the level of control they have in their lives and misapprehension: they walk down the alleys to watch their lives as from a distance. Immersed in

In such conflicting circumstances, with characters confused even about their own others view others/lives.

pose much is responsible the ways in which one views one's own life and the ways in which it be believers are own ideas. Ironically it is the wisdom in Chekhov's plays, not Chekhov himself, *ian from himself, and I believe I am constructing my own life.' Nine-tenths of the first translators cannot display her somnolescent eccentric ecstasy when he tells her, 'I have to* natural and does not know that he/she is feeling within his own 'full, spontaneous existence') *for instance—here fascinating, brilliant liars full of meaning.'* (1889, p. 109) She despises *barely dig out their days in drab obscurity. They're all alike and all miserable. But others. Sor-* rison, tells him, 'If you knew how I envy you. Peoples lives work out so differently. Some

explanations of the problem of these desires and needs. Nina, full of admiration for Treplev's Chekhov also posits the conflict between one's own desires and needs and others potentially self-destructive for himself. Such oppression has no real cause: it simply exists by others as a symbol of their own aspirations, not whose attempts at self-expression are the aim of writing purely on feelings of despair and failure. Thus we have a character who is not all pessimism. Treplev, however, is baffled and often dismayed by her actions, for he finds that

reach to idealise the writer as does the doctor Dorn. Treplev, Arkadina's son, tends to resent observance, she reads to control a creature so that she can dominate strictly on her own. Nina but a genuine need to capture him become, as a woman who is primarily concerned with

naturally to create strife: he becomes beyond the boundary of taste and indecision. Arkadina Arkadina, the actress, is a figure identical by the fact of the impression become he has the discover some of the common themes of Chekhov's drama. Triplets is writer and poet of

hair at love. (31 October 1888).[2] In fact, it is through the characters' talk of literature we

plays: "It's comedy with a lot of talk about literature, little action, many pseudo-erudite and a action. It's a letter to Suvorin. Chekhov talks about his attitude towards his than motivated attitudes toward the understanding of plays, but, as always, discussion takes precedence over

so this confusion, deriving from self-absorption, may explain why the characters create and perpetuate stagnation in their lives. Lack of self-worth, and, more importantly, lack of self-knowledge also contributes to the listlessness and quiet, ironic humour of the characters. Treplev, for example, feels very much the failure while under his mother's influence and is overwhelmed by Trigorin's success. Like his mother, he cares very much about others' opinions of him, yet he wishes to break free from the old forms. The play that he stages in the first act is an expression at once both of his yearnings and his isolation. It lacks living characters, for, as he tells Nina, "We should show life neither as it is nor as it ought to be, but as we see it in our dreams" (p. 238). Such a comment illustrates his frustration, and we are made to question whether Treplev believes this because he is uncertain that his dreams can ever become a reality. Do these characters hold onto dreams to secure themselves, to stop themselves from being divorced from both life and hope? The individual in Treplev's play is fused with all of nature, all of history, though he is frustrated because of the lack of transcendence. It is ironic that the other characters to speak of dreams in a similar way are Nina, at the conclusion to act two, and Trigorin, who attempts to break off with Arkadina and declares his love for Nina saying ironically, "You know how people sometimes sleep-walk? Talking to you now, I feel as I was asleep, dreaming of her. I'm possessed by visions of delight" (p. 264). Treplev loses the woman he loves to a figure who attempts to make his dreams manifest, though this figure also destroys those expectations which made Nina sacrifice herself to him in the first place. After two years have passed and Nina has returned for a brief visit, Treplev thinks on her and observes to Sorin, "It's easy enough to be a philosopher on paper, Doctor, but how hard to act like one!" (p. 278).

Such a statement is applicable to almost every character in the play, although they all achieve a different degree of awareness of its application. The doctor, holding fast to his belief in the wonder of the writer's act of creation, was himself in love with Nina. Masha too loves one whose love she can never hope to receive, and all her talk about desiring to "wrench this love out of my heart and uproot it" (p. 258) is to no avail. Her despair at the beginning of act one--"I'm in mourning for my life, I'm unhappy" (p. 238)--act two--"My life seems to drag on endlessly,

Such a statement is applicable to almost every character in the play, although they all achieve a different degree of awareness of its application. The doctor, holding fast to his belief in the wonder of the writer's act of creation, was himself in love with Nina. Having too long one-sidedly developed in their lives' lack of self-worth, and, more importantly, lack in self-knowledge also contributes to the bitterness and cruelty, ironic humour of the characters' behaviour in their lives. Lack of self-worth, and, more importantly, lack in self-knowledge also contributes to the bitterness and cruelty, ironic humour of the characters' confusion, deriving from self-deception, may explain why the characters create and

1760).

Such a statement is applicable to almost every character in the play, although they all

--- "Why only comply to be a philosopher on paper, Doctor, but pay heed to it in life also?" (p. 1760). "You know how people sometimes sleep-walk? Talking to you now, I feel as I were asleep, dreaming of her. I'm possessed by visions of delight" (p. 1764). Trepliov loves the woman he loves to a degree who attempts to make his dreams manifest, though this figure also destroys those objectives which made Nina inscribe herself to him in the first place. After two years Nina returned and Nina has remained for a brief visit. Trepliov thinks on her and observes to

in monotony for my life. I'm unhappy" (p. 1765)--act two--"My life seems to drag on aimlessly out of my heart and abroad it" (p. 1765) into normal. Her departure at the beginning of act one--"I'm always free she was never happy to remain, and all her talk about devoting to "wards that love

and I often think I'd rather be dead" (p. 248)--and in the protestation about uprooting her love in act three--is realised in her marriage to the boring Medvendenko in act four. How much of the stagnation in her life at this point was brought on by her total immersion in unrequited love? "Unhappy love affairs are only found in novels," she tells Polina Andreyevna. "What nonsense! The thing is, don't give way to it, and don't moon about waiting for the tide to turn. If love enters your heart, get rid of it" (p. 270). Very few of Chekhov's characters can resign themselves to their conditions, however, perhaps because they have intensified the unpleasantness of their positions with their aspirations. Certainly, their lives are never what they expected them to be: Polina Andreyevna comments that, "Our time is nearly over," only for Arkadina to reply, "That can't be helped" (p. 266). And just as their unwillingness to know themselves contributes to their feelings of futility, so their inability to realise their hopes in time adds to the despairing and quiet comedy of their lives. Even a more comic character like Sorin acknowledges his position with some honesty, and the comic quality of his "defeat" undercuts some of the inherent seriousness of the others' defeats:

> I'd like to give Kostya a plot for a novel. It ought to be called *The Man who Wanted --L'homme qui a voulu*. In youth I wanted to become a writer--I didn't. I wanted to speak well--I speak atrociously....I wanted to live in town all the time--and here I am ending my days in the country and so on.
>
> [p. 271]

Of course, he did become councillor of the state, as Dorin points out, but his despair does not consider achievements, only defeat: he tells Dorn, "can't you see I want a bit of life?" (p. 271). It is significant that he does as well as most other characters in that, even though he is not tormented by the griefs of unrealized loves or dreams, he endures. Treplev alone does not endure, for the stoical comment from his love destroys any significance at all to his life and aspirations. At the end, he has neither a philosophy on paper nor one in life, as she does. In some distraction, Nina tells him, "in our work--no matter whether we're actors or writers--the great thing isn't fame or glory, it isn't what I dream of, but simply stamina. You must know how to bear your cross and have faith" (p. 280).

to peer from cross and bone fairly" (p. 280).

finer thing isn't fame or glory, it isn't what I dream of, but simply stamina. You must know how some quiet action. Nina tells him, "In our work--no matter whether we're actors or writers--the important thing in life is not fame or glory, not what I dreamt of, but the ability to endure. You bear your cross and believe in your calling, and I have faith, and it doesn't hurt me to bear mine, and I often think I deserve be dead" (p. 286)--and in the penultimate scene of the play, he does not consider achievements, only duties: he tells Dorn, "can't you see I want a bit of life?" (p. 311). It is significant that he does as well as most other characters in that, even though he is not tormented by the griefs of unrealized love or dreams. He endures. Chekhov alone does not endure: for the actual moment from his love duration any significance at all to his own life. Of course, he did become councillor of the state, so Dorn points out, but his despair does not

(p. 311)

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Dreary well--I sheer atrocity!...I wanted to live in town all the time--and here I -- Nowhere can a young, in young I wanted to become a writer--I didn't. I wanted to

I'd like to give Kostya's plot to a novel. It ought to be called The Man who Wanted

underscores some of the inherent seriousness of the others' debates:

Boris schoolwidge his burton with tone honesty, and the comic gravity of his "sheer time edge to the depressed and dim comedy of their lives. Even a more comic character like Arkadina contributes to their reality, to their inability to realize their hopes in themselves or their conditions. Sometimes, perhaps because they have internalized the ridiculousness of their positions with explanations. Constantly their lives reverberate with Arkadina to reply, "That can't be helped" (p. 289). And just as their unwillingness to know themselves to be pitiful, Polina Andreyevna comments that, "Our tune is nearly over," only to

love others from them. He did it" (p. 310). Very few of Chekhov's characters can resign ourselves. The third is, don't live with it, and don't insist upon about wanting the right to insist it

love." Unhappy love affairs are only found in novels," the tall Polina Andreyevna. "After the depression in her life at this point, was brought on by her cruel insistence in unrealized in all time--it realized it: her marriage to the young bachelor in all love. Her

In The Seagull, the sheer ability to endure can be maintained even when the hopes that one character has concerning another are defeated; endurance involves self-knowledge and realization of the human condition. Endurance need not involve acceptance of the conditions of life, however, as is shown in Treplev's suicide, and it need not signal any stability in the degree of suffering and boredom in a life. When one's hopes are pinned on another, when one credits so much of one's life to the position of another, the ability to endure may not be enough. In Uncle Vanya, we encounter characters who, at the onset, have managed to endure boredom and hardships of their lives; they have already subordinated their dreams by fulfilling their work for the professor Serebryakov. The hint that matters may worsen, which may be implicit in Nina's speech (it may be revealed in Treplev's suicide), is realised at the conclusion to Uncle Vanya, where not only are more expectations defeated, but man's isolation both from his desires and from understanding of his fellow man is made evident. The tenuous quality of relationships among people is drawn with greater skill in this play than it was in The Sea Gull, and so we get the sense that although men fight against the realization of their isolation, they may bring more suffering upon themselves by trying to realize their hopes in others. The dependency they have on others may destroy them more for it shows them that their own conduct has intensified their misery. The movement of this play, and indeed the movements of Chekhov's later plays, is not one toward the denouement of the plot but toward a greater self-awareness. Conflict is conflict of will, mind, understanding, boredom. Surely this is what Chekhov meant when he criticized the actress N.S. Butova for an overactive portrayal of Sonya: "The whole meaning and drama of a person is inside, not in outward manifestations."[8] The quality of endurance, a state of mind and will, thus alters with the movement of the "drama" within a character.

The real drama of this play is the characters' search for justification of their lives, and so we follow Vanya, Astrov, and Sonya as they struggle on, sustained by hope but confronted with circumstance. Serebryakov's arrival on the estate upsets the continuity of their lives, for he is not what they thought he was. In act two, Uncle Vanya reflects,

drama" within a character.

The quality of resistance, a mark of merit and will, thus aligns with the movement of the drama: "The whole inwardly and dramatic of a person is inside, not in outward manifestation."[4] Chekhov means when he criticized the actress M.P. Ilinova for an overactive portrayal of self-awareness. Conflict is conditional will, mind vacillating, pondering. Surely that is what Chekhov's later plays, in one case toward the devolvement of the plot but toward a greater awareness has intensified their misery. The movement of this play and indeed the movements of dependency they have on others may destroy them more for it shows them their own may bring more illiterate idiom characters of relative to realize than poise is others. The and so on for the same that although man fight against the realization of their isolation, they relationships accomplishments is drawn with greater skill in *Uncle Vanya* than it was in *The Wild Duck*. desires and from subservience of his fellow man is made evident. The common quality of *Uncle*, where not only are more independent delusions, but man's isolation both from in Ibsen's drama it may be revealed in Ibsen's midcal. It realized after the conclusion to *Uncle* vote for characteristic development. The first-time matters may women, which may be implicit and parallels of their lives they have already subconscious than drawn by building their in *Uncle Vanya*. We encounter characters who, at the outset, have managed to endure boredom endurance much of course like inertia position of comfort the ability to endure anyone be enough. layers of withering and tension in a life. When one's hopes are pinned on another, when one of life. However, as in *Ivanov* in *Treplev's* suicide, one is used not killed any stability in the realization of the human condition. Emotions need not involve acceptance of the conditions one character has concerning another are dictated motivations involves self-knowledge and

In *The Seagull* the sheer activity of science can be mentioned even when the scope (the

> I was proud of him and his great learning. He was the very breath of life to me. Everything he wrote or uttered seemed to me inspired....Now he's retired you can see exactly what his life is worth. Not a page of his work will survive him. He's totally obscure, a nonentity....And I've made a fool of myself, I see it now a complete fool.
>
> [UV; p. 86]

Vanya re-directed his own ideas and made himself believe that the professor accomplished all the things he wished for, yet in the end, Vanya only cheats himself because he invented and perpetuated such ideas. His disgust is directed against himself, although he continues to take his frustration out on Serebryakov, who is himself disgusted with the advent of old age. Vanya fights against exterior forces which are overcoming him, but he also fights against the full awareness that his life has been idled away supporting a man who himself could not turn aspirations into accomplishments. His age oppresses him because it signals the lack of achievements in his past, and it also signals his inability to rectify his position when the professor sells the estate and intends to drive those out who had supported him for so long: "You've ruined my life! I've not lived, not lived, I tell you. Thanks to you the best years of my life have been thrown down the drain. You are my worst enemy!" (p. 55). Through his work for another, Vanya has betrayed himself; his distress is real, but not unforeseen. It is something self-inflicted to some extent and perpetuated by Vanya's constant emotionalism.

Chekhov keeps a check on the pathetic mood of Vanya's situation by highlighting this very emotionalism, by setting it in contrast to the reactions of other characters who must confront the alteration of their assumptions. In this way, the tone of the play does not darken, and more of a character is revealed to us. Humour also plays a part in the contrast between different responses to similar problems. In the fourth act, for example, Vanya's despair is shown and compared to Astrov's future and slightly spiritual optimism:

> Voynitsky: Oh, can you think--?...[*feverishly clutches Astrov's hand*]Can you think what it would be like to live the rest of one's life in a new way? Oh, to wake up some fine, clear morning feeling as if you'd started living all over again, as if the past was all forgotten, gone like a puff of smoke. [*Weeps*]...
>
> Astrov [*annoyed*]: Oh, get away with you. New life indeed. Our situation's hopeless, yours and mine.
>
> Voynitsky: Is it?

totally obscure, a nonentity....And I've made a fool of myself. I see it now a complete fool.

[IV.p.89]

I was proud of him and his great learning. He was the very breath of life to me. Everything he wrote or uttered seemed to me inspired....Now he's retired you can see exactly what his life is worth. Not a page of his work will survive him. He's

> Astrov: I'm perfectly certain of it.
> Voynitsky: Please, give me something. [*Pointing to his heart*] I've a burning feeling here!
> Astrov [*shouts angrily*]. Oh, shut up! [*More gently*] Those who live a century or two after us and despise us for leading lives so stupid and tasteless, perhaps they'll find a way to be happy, but as for us--. There's only one hope for you and me, that when we're resting in our graves we may have visions. Even pleasant ones perhaps. [*Sighs*] Yes, my dear fellow. In our whole district there were only two decent, civilized people--you and I.
> [pp. 60, 61]

Despair, self-pity, and pomposity are in a curious blend in these speeches; as in life, they blend into one another, undercut one another, enhance one another. Astrov's character is more comic than that of Vanya; the typical Chekhovian doctor, Astrov is self-absorbed, although he does take to philosophizing when given any opportunity. Despite his despair for the present, he can recognize that his lethargy is often self-imposed, as when he tells Sonya that, like her uncle, "I'm disappointed with life....He and I are turning into a couple of old grousers" (p. 38). This dissatisfaction is not brought on by idleness, nor is it alleviated by the Chekhovian emphasis on the therapeutic advantages of work ("life here is so dreary and stupid and sordid" (p. 19)). Unlike Vanya, however, Astrov can derive some satisfaction from reaching beyond his present, squalid life to the life which will come in the future. It is significant to note that Astrov is reluctant to hope for a brighter future in his life, especially just at that time when he is beginning to feel his age, and yet he reaches beyond the immediate to something which could presumably be frustrated; we cannot know. This movement from present frustration and distress toward the creation of a new expectation reinforces the tenuousness of human relationships in these plays and also destroys what could be a very heavy melancholic atmosphere for the play. The continuation of expectations and the hold that the characters seek to have over promising plans--however slight a promise there might be--also lend themselves to the benevolent humour that Chekhov sought to produce. In talking to Sonya about Astrov, Elena Andreyevna (who also loves Astrov) admits that, "When he plants a tree he's already working out what the result will be in a thousand years' time, already glimpsing man's future happiness. People like that are rare and should be cherished" (p. 42).

The rarity in Astrov's method is his treatment of future happiness as something certain,

whole district there were only two decent, civilized people--you and I. [p. 60, 61]

Astrov [absent-mindedly]. Oh, shut up! [More gaily] Those who live a century or two after us and despise us for leading lives so stupid and tasteless, perhaps they'll find a way to be happy, but as for us--. There's only one hope for you and me, that when we're resting in our graves we may have visions. Even pleasant ones perhaps. [Sighs] Yes, my dear fellow. In our

Yelena [presses Astrov's hand]. Please, give me something. [Pointing to his desk] I've a burning feeling here.

Astrov [gives her a bottle from the desk]. I'm perfectly certain of it.

and, most probably, he must derive such feelings from his actions. At times, he manages to transcend the certain displeasure he feels for his life. Planting trees is a break from the summer's lethargy and idleness, which Astrov can undertake while the others persevere in making reflections on their condition. His deeds serve to justify his existence, to keep a check on his feelings of having led a wasted life, for, as he says, with "nothing in the world to do, you may as well admit it--no object in life, nothing to occupy your mind--and sooner or later your feelings are going to be too much for you" (p. 62). His good friend is a case in point; "the present," observes Vanya, " is so futile, it appalls me," (p. 84) since it is the culmination of past days full of his trifles and emptiness. Yet for Astrov, the awfulness of the absurdity is not as great because the ridiculousness which makes up his life has not been concurrent with idleness or the like for as long a time. In typical Chekhovian fashion, though, he is taken in by the boredom which seems to permeate the place. Again, present boredom is not the preoccupation of the characters, for they are concerned with the likelihood of frustration and emptiness in the days to come. On the one hand, they reject the notion that their lives will seem to be as purposeless, and on the other hand, they anticipate such purposelessness and find comfort in its inevitability. Certainly, Vanya grumbles and scoffs, but when he sees that affairs are worsening, he grows despairing. His professed love for Elena Andreyvna is a reaction against his loss of control, his anger that things cannot even be on the same level as before. When Serebryakov takes his leave from the people of the estate, Vanya tells him, " Everything will be just as it was" (p. 64), but while we do not doubt the sincerity of the statement, we do doubt its certainty. There is increased isolation at the end of the play, for even Astrov, one whose hope in certainties was a rare thing, abandons his friends. Sonya, Vanya, Maria Vasilyevna, and the nurse remain, trapped by a sense of futility greater than that which they felt before. The "drama" of the play has therefore moved from a balance between uncertainty and hope: Sonya tells her uncle, "There's been no happiness in your life, but wait, Uncle Vanya, wait. We shall find peace. We shall find peace" (p. 67). It is really Chekhov's examination of certainty and expectation that holds the play together, from Astrov's tree planting to Vanya's despair, to Sonya's stoical endurance after accepting her unrequited love. It is some sort of hope that keeps these

acquiescence after accepting her unrequited love. It is some sort of note that keeps these
holds the play together, from Astrov's tree planting to Vanya's desire to destroy it. Beyond
that, the play's theme." (p. 57). It is really Chekhov's examination of character and expectation that
matters in human relationships, which Astrov too maintains while the others persevere in
their self-interest on their condition. His deeds serve to heighten existence, to help a chaotic
world as well when it can't adjust in life. Astrov's "country-house mind—and sooner or later you
will go mad" (p. 61) is the point for you." (p. 62). His good friend is a case in point: "the professor,
obsessive Yelena," is so futile, it appalls me." (p. 64) since it is the culmination of your days but is
his entire encompasses. He, for Astrov, the emptiness of the absurdity is not as great because
the relationships with makes up his life has not been concerned with silliness or the life to
no long a time. In typical Chekhovian fashion, though, he is taken in by the scenario which
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desperately Hitchcockian love for Elena Andreyevna is a reaction against his fears of control, but
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from the people in the house, Vanya cries him, "Everything will be just as it was" (p. 64), but
there is no going back to the status quo ante. Vanya, Ilarion, Voinitzeva, and the nurse remain.
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transcend the curtain displacements to their for his life. Planting trees is a break from the
end, must probably, he must devote such insanity from his actions. At times, he manages to

characters on course, hope more than truth, as is shown in a dialogue between Sonya and Elena Andreyevna as the latter promises to ask the doctor if he loves Sonya:

> Elena Andreyevna: You go and tell him I want to see him.
> Sonya [*very agitated*]: You will tell me the whole truth, won't you?
> Elena Andreyevna: Of course I will. It's always better to know the truth, however bad, or that's what I think. Better than not knowing, anyway. Depend on me, dear.
> Sonya: Yes, yes, I'll say you want to see his maps. [*Starts to leave, then stops by the door*] No, not knowing *is* better. At least there's still hope.
>
> [p. 46]

Chekhov's emphasis on certainty and expectation thus reveals the ways in which his characters seek to justify their work, their philosophies and loves, as Uncle Vanya clearly shows, but it is significant that Chekhov sees not only how certainty and expectation can contradict one another, but also how they can complement one another. Obviously, the truth of a character's situation may encourage or defeat his hopes, but a playwright, in his analysis of the character's responses to these situations, can use such hopes to question what one thinks of as a certainty. For example, in the second act of The Three Sisters, Masha observes, "I feel that a man should have a faith or be trying to find one....Either you know what you're living for, or else the whole thing's a waste of time and means less than nothing" (TTS: p. 100). And so she, like her sisters and others in the play, devotes much of her time to the examination of her condition, to the spinning of philosophies which have little bearing on the condition of her life. She will live, she will endure whether or not she obtains the knowledge that she seeks, for the certainty of her condition challenges all her expectations. Her life is still under her own direction, however, and if it is "the absolute limit" (p. 87) as she so describes it, we are meant to be aware that she bears it all the same. She and her sisters bear hardships of their own creation, just as they suffer for their mistakes in and misapplications of love. Each of the sisters continues to learn how to reconcile her hopes in with the apparent meaninglessness of her life, though they all do not recognize that they make such struggles alone. When Masha confesses her love for Veshinin in the Third Act, she makes such a confession nearly alone, for Olga has gone behind her screen. "When you fall in love yourself," observes Masha, "You see that

Olga has gone behind her screen. "When you fall in love yourself," observes Masha, "You see that confessor her love for Vershinin in the Third Act, she makes such a confession, nearly alone, to her life, though they all do not recognize that they make such struggles alone. When Masha starts continues to learn how to reconcile our private life with the abstract requirements of creation. Just as they suffer for their mistakes in and misapplications of love. Each of the be aware that she bears it all the same. She and her sisters bear hardships of their own liberation however, and it is "the absolute limit" (p. 67) at the beginning of the play that the sisters the certainty of her ambition challenges all her expectations. Her life is still under her own life. She will live, she will endure when she is not the obvious the knowledge that the sisters [a] constant, to the spinning of philosophies which have little bearing on the condition of the like her sisters and others in the play, devotes much of her time to the examination of her else the whole tragedy's worth of time and means left [sic] to [illegible]" (TLE, p. 150). And to the men should have a task to be trying to find them. Either you know what you're living for, or it's certainty. For example, in the second act of The Three Sisters, Masha (who is "[feeling] that the characters' motivations (these attributes can vary from play to play) when one thinks of a character's emotions may commonly be stated but vague, but a playwright, in his analysis of [whether] or not Chekhov's characters are motivated by emotions. Obviously the roots of somewhat controversial, but also how they are [illegible] motivated. Generally the roots of Chekhov emphasis on certainty and expectation thus reveals the ways in which his characters seem to [illegible] their work. Their philosophies and loves: as Uncle Vanya wisely

[p. 46]

Sonya: Yes, yes. I'll say you want to see his mother. [Starts to leave, then stops.] [whether] No, not knowing is better. At least there's still hope.

Elena Andreyevna: You go and tell him I want to see him, dear.

Sonya [exasperated]: You will tell me the whole truth, won't you?

Elena Andreyevna: Of course I will. It's always better to know the truth, however bad, or that's what I think. Better then not knowing anyway. Depend on me, dear.

Andreyevna as the latter promises to ask the doctor if he loves Sonya:

nobody knows anything and we all have to decide these things for ourselves" (p. 120). The truth of her words is enhanced by her position on the stage; she is surrounded by people, but she is isolated. Even her relationships with others call her most cherished hopes into question, but she still yearns to know what her life and her actions signify. The tension between her understanding and her frustration and boredom is ironic, almost comic at times, especially when such tension is exacerbated by love. For she, like her sisters, struggles onward, earnestly searching for better things while still believing that life has beaten her. Vershinin asks her, "A Russian feels so much at home when his thoughts are up in the clouds, but tell me--why is his everyday life so very earthbound? Why?" She asks him "Why?" in return, before commenting that he is in "rather a bad mood today" (p. 95). In Chekhov's plays, one's expectations reveal their futility by juxtaposition with mundane things; one's own concerns undercut the certainty of another's despair and reveal one's own.

A character's expectations are related to the conditions under which he lives, since failure to act on hopes, combined with the isolation of each character (self-imposed and perpetuated by others characters' isolation) determine his attitude about his life. Chekhov continually asserts that boredom and futility are caused by lack of proper attitude, lack of industry, and so, with Chekhov's increasing emphasis on character's responses to futility in the later plays, characters' conduct becomes an important means by which expectations are examined. In The Three Sisters, characters often make references to fleeting opportunities, to chances left untried in the past, to the passage of time; the movement of time is also emphasised by the structure of the plots themselves, which document responses to circumstance over the space of several years. We get the sense that Chekhov's characters are unable or unwilling to conduct themselves well in present situations, and so their future actions are ruled somewhat by past conduct. Vershinin has some lovely, if idealistic ideas about living two versions of one life: "I often wonder what it would be like if we could start living all over again, knowing exactly what we were doing. Suppose our past life could be just the rough draft, so to speak, and we could start the new one on a fresh sheet of paper. Then we would try not to repeat ourselves, I imagine. We'd create different surroundings for ourselves anyway..." (p. 85). Of course, Vershinin's

We'd create different surroundings for ourselves anyway..." (p. 86). Of course, Veershinin's start the new one on a fresh sheet of paper. Then we would try not to repeat ourselves. I imagine what we were doing. Suppose our past life could be just the rough draft, so to speak, and we could like." I often wonder what it would be like if we could start living all over again. Knowing exactly by past conduct. Veershinin has some lovely, idealistic ideas about living two versions of one conduct themselves well in present situations, and so their future actions are ruled somewhat place of several years. We get the sense that Chekhov's characters are unable or unwilling to by the structure of the plots themselves, which document responses to circumstance over the

~~[illegible]~~ ~~[illegible]~~ ~~[illegible]~~

speculation is derived from his frustration about his suicidal wife, but although his speeches are full of talk of change, his behaviour reflects none of his anticipation. "Does anyone mind if I go on? I'm in just the mood to air my views at the moment" (p. 116), he observes to the people gathered in the sisters' room during the fire in act three, and indeed most of Chekhov's characters are usually in the mood to "go on." Because most of these longings to philosophize are undercut by something mundane or comic in the play, we sense Chekhov's ridicule of self-absorption, as when Irina laments her condition to Tuzenbach (who does not listen to her), "You say life is beautiful. But what if it only seems so?...there hasn't been any beauty in our lives so far" (p. 88). At the conclusion of this speech, Natasha enters "*wearing a pink dress with a green sash*" (p. 88). Such a touch is suitably garish and relieves the contagious melancholy of people struggling with their lives. In other places, however, such ridicule is also tempered by sympathy; Chekhov seems to advocate moderation and self-control, but he does recognize that control of the self under all circumstances is often difficult. Masha comments in the fourth act that "When you snatch what crumbs of happiness you can and then lose it all, as is happening to me, you gradually grow hard and bad-tempered" (p. 128). Control thus involves enduring idleness and boredom no less than pain.

In a letter to Olga Knipper, who played Masha in the first production, dated 2 January 1901, Chekhov takes care to make a distinction between despair and bitterness, to emphasize that sort of half-comic distress in which many of his characters live: "People who have been unhappy for a long time, and grown used to it, don't get beyond whistling and are often wrapped up in their thoughts."[4] The maintenance of some sort of control within a state of melancholy is therefore systematic, and many characters do not break from the pattern of unhappiness which stems from their thwarted expectations because they are absorbed in their condition, because they come to expect similar unhappiness. For these reasons, mental and physical work, the usual remedies for distressed minds, cannot benefit the lives of characters. Such actions may teach men about their world, their past, but they cannot teach such men anything about themselves. In The Three Sisters, Irina may profess in the first act that "man should work and toil by the sweat of his brow, whoever he is--that's the whole purpose and meaning of

work and toil bathe sweat of his brow, whoever pays—that's the whole purpose and meaning of
those themselves. In *The Three Sisters* time may produce in the end no less than small

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[illegible] in the street, room during the line is not there, and indeed none of Chekhov's
I do not live the moods or my views at the moment." (p. 116) he observes to the [illegible]
ave full of sun or cruelty. His [illegible] reflect more of his participation. "Does anyone mind
description is derived from his instruction about his mental work, but although his physique

his life, his happiness and joy" (p. 75); by the second act, she has become frustrated with her job in the telegraph office and has let her own unhappiness isolate her from others: "Just now a woman came into the post office and wanted to send a telegram to her brother in Saratov to tell him her son died today, but couldn't remember the address. So she sent it without a proper address....She was crying. And I was rude to her for no reason at all, told her I'd no time to waste. Wasn't that stupid of me?" (p. 97). For her, work only intensifies her unhappiness; for others, work and daily philosophizing either increase their awareness of the monotony of life or introduce expectations about future generations. Vershinin, like Astrov in Uncle Vanya, reasons that he suffers for those who will come after him; Tuzenbach emphasizes the purposeless pattern of daily, yearly, timeless life. His philosophies reflect patterns of these character's lives, as they go on living, searching, yearning for a knowledge which they are unable to acquire: "...life will be just the same as ever. It doesn't change, it always goes on the same and follows its own laws. And those laws are none of our business. Or at least you'll never understand them." He goes on to liken men to cranes who "keep on flying without ever knowing why they do it or where they're going....Let them keep their philosophy so long as they don't stop flying" (p. 99).

Such yearnings for knowledge and such instinctive desires to "go on flying" are comic, however, because where some characters only become more despairing when they realise their inability to understand their condition, others greedily absorb facts and use them--albeit unwittingly--to destroy the fragile dignity of human existence. It is in the use of these portraits of such characters that Chekhov flowers, and it is this use of humour which allows the later plays to complete Chekhov's examination of the human condition. Life may seem meaningless and painful, but it is also fundamentally comic. For example, Masha's encounters with her husband demonstrate the way in which Chekhov juxtaposes the meaningless and the absurd with the despairing and the futile. Kulygin is certainly not a despicable person, although his simplemindedness and unrestricted devotion irritate Masha; she feels that her marriage is a farce and tends to cringe when he exposes his love. Throughout the play, he uses Latin tags to describe--somewhat tiresomely--various situations, and so there is great irony in her response

describe--some what ironically--various situations, and so there is [illegible] in her response tone and tempo to change when he exposes his love. Throughout the play, he uses Latin text to [illegible] simplemindedness and unrestrained devotion irritate Masha; she feels that her marriage is a [illegible] with the doctor, and the irony implicit in Dorn's use of [illegible] eloquently demonstrate the way in which Chekhov juxtaposes the meaningless and the absurd and painful. But it is also fundamentally comic. For example, Masha's encounters with her husband, the pedantic schoolmaster Kulygin, are filled with [illegible] and [illegible] to [illegible] of such characters that Chekhov frowns, and it is this use of humour which allows the later playlets to complete Chekhov's examination of the human condition. Life may seem meaningless [illegible]--to destroy the illegible dullness of [illegible] existence. It is in these moments that [illegible] to maintain their conviction, share [illegible] speech lines and use them--often however, because some characters only become more desperate when they realize their inability to [illegible] [illegible].

Such yearnings for knowledge and such instinctive desires to "go on living" are comic. [illegible] do it or when they're [illegible]. In fact, Kulygin philosophizes not [illegible] they don't stop [illegible] p. 39).

[illegible] to change. The [illegible] can [illegible] and [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] to [illegible] [illegible] to [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

to his endearments, "My splendid, wonderful wife--I love you , I love no one but you" : Masha [*irascibly*]: Amo, amas, amat, amamus, amatis, amant" (p. 118). Masha undercuts her husband's idle sentimentality, for she realizes that there is no such thing as loving only one person. She loves and is loved by another, and thus the whole cycle of human relationships ends in a child's paradigm, a lesson one can only learn by rote.

Education has not freed her, nor has it freed any of the sisters; their constant references to it signify their lack of self-knowledge, their unwillingness to act on their desires. Latin grammar and Italian vocabulary, like the constant reference to Moscow, punctuate the days of the sisters; these things represent a form of knowledge but are meaningless nontheless. In the third act, Irina is distraught at her condition, for she fears losing hold of even that limited understanding: "Oh my God, I've forgotten, forgotten everything, my head's all in a whirl. I can't remember the Italian for 'window'--or 'ceiling' either" (p. 119). She is in despair, yet her speech is comic. As an audience, we might laugh, recognizing all the while that the need to know "window" in Italian is a valid, though superfluous one. Irina is only trying to justify one small part of her life; the attempt may be comic, but it is a significant attempt. It is only when her despair deepens--"I feel I'm losing touch with everything fine and genuine in life. It's like sinking down, down into a bottomless pit. I'm desperate. Why am I still alive, why haven't I done away with myself? I don't know"--that the humour wavers. The conclusion of the play turns on just such a delicate balance between the comic and the pitiful: "If only we could know!" (p. 139). We cannot know why we are alive and why we force ourselves to continue suffering the torments of our own creation, but like birds of flight, we do. This continuity is part of the comedy of life, when the characters seem so close to what they seek, but try as they might, they simply cannot win the cigar.

An even greater emphasis on humour in the midst of failed expectations is found in Chekhov's last play, The Cherry Orchard, where many of the same themes of earlier plays--work, boredom, slighted love, frustration--find a pleasing interpretation in humorous terms. "The next play I write will definitely be funny, very funny--at least in intention," he wrote to Olga Knipper on 7 March 1901.[5] In fact, some parts of the play are almost straight

wrote to Olga Knipper, 2 March 1901: "In fact, some parts of the play are almost unreality. The new play I write will probably be ready very much—as soon as autumn." To Chekhov, love was work, boredom, slighted love, frustration—that a pleasing incandescence it sometimes took. The Cherry Orchard, whose irony of the term teemed of mature

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to his endearments. "My splendid, wonderful wife—I love you. I love no one but you." Masha's

slap-stick and farce. As mentioned above, humour actually complements the despair and frustration, for while it alleviates the potential sentimentality of the plays, it keeps the audience in mind of the absurdity of human actions and reactions. A character like Yepikhodov, the man of many troubles, endures the troubles which descend upon him with something akin to consummate grace; he perseveres with a brightness that the other characters lack: "Every day something awful happens to me. Not that I complain, I'm used to it. Even raise a smile" (TCO: p. 146). Yepikhodov trips as most people do, except that he does so with regularity. He is tormented by little hazards while the rest of the characters are confronted with troubles of great magnitude, yet Chekhov must mean to show us that we also trip up our lives through quirks in our natures, through the best of intentions which just do not happen to blend in smoothly with the course of life. Yepikhodov, too, lacks self-knowledge but still wishes to have some control over a life which he does not understand: "I'm a cultured sort of person and read all kinds of remarkable books, but I just can't get a line on what it is I'm really after. Shall I go on living or shall I shoot myself, I mean? But, anyway, I always carry a revolver. Here it is [*Shows them his revolver*]" (p. 168). This revolver signifies that he still has the means to affect something in the reality in which he suffers, yet we know that he will not shoot himself, will keep squashing hat-boxes, breaking billiard cues, and swallowing water the wrong way. The comedy of his character undercuts the solemnity of others and also tells us that the others will also keep enduring, though perhaps without the laughter and the smile.

Yepikhodov's life seems to one eternally befuddled present, and his expectations about the future are essentially realistic, for he does not suppose that much will change in his life. As a result, the humour of his acceptance of this life lends itself to Chekhov's examination of the way in which the other characters of the play view their lives; they tend to be more despairing, although they do not carry revolvers on them. Instead, they tend to carry the past with them, with a tenacity that seems to be more a product of instinct than understanding. Firs, the deaf manservant, speaks of a method of drying cherries which is now forgotten. He speaks at length of the wonderful quality of the method but cannot remember the process: "Forgotten. No one remembers it" (p. 154). Similarly, the characters still keep to the old forms of their lives for

remembers it," p. 164). Similarly the characters still keep to the old forms of their lives for the available reality of the method but cannot remember the process. Vershinin, for example, speaks of a method of dying cheerfully which is now forgotten. He speaks of happily [illegible] (p. 166). Vershinin cries as most people do, except that he does so with complete [illegible] unashamedly into his sleeve while the characters are entertained with something in their mouths. The Chekhov must mean to show us that we also trip up on the [illegible] despite in our manner, through the use of language which has not happened to have some control over a life which he does not understand. "In a cultured sort of person and in common with the source of this, Vershinin, has to tell knowledge has still always [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

sentimental reasons, even though the methods and meanings are forgotten. Ranevskaya and Gayev lament the passing of time, the loss of their money, the imminent loss of the cherry orchard which is so dear to them. The orchard is the playground of their youth; it marks the progress of their lives as they combat with loss of dreams, loss of love, and the deaths of those they loved. In many ways, it justifies their lives because it does not change, yet it restrains them too, because by resisting change, they compound their difficulties:

> Ranevskaya: Oh, my childhood, my innocent childhood! This is the nursery where I slept and I used to look out at the orchard from here. When I woke up every morning happiness awoke with me, and the orchard was just the same in those days. Nothing's changed....If I could only shake off the heavy burden that weighs me down, if only I could forget my past.
>
> Gayev: Yes, and now the orchard's to be sold to pay our debts, unlikely as it may sound.
>
> [p. 157]

The orchard stands, as if in testimony to the illusions which are still intact. It is worthless now, because no-one will purchase the cherries; its present uselessness is really no-one's fault. Still, it cannot be preserved because of the characters' wastefulness, and so, by not accepting the change in circumstances, Ranevskaya and Gayev are actually destroying what they love the most. From the happiness of their past, they have drawn an illusion which will ultimately destroy the source of their original happiness. They cause themselves some anguish, instead of stumbling on ahead as Yepikhodov does.

Both the futility and the absurdity of their position are made known by the actions and illusions of another character, Lopakhin, who instigates the process by which they will be forced to accept the loss of their orchard (and all the dreams it represents). Lopakhin is also sentimental and tenacious, but he is continually trying to better himself. In trying to gain ownership of the orchard, he hopes to move beyond his past, when his parents were serfs on the estate. He does have a strong regard for Ranevskaya and her family, but such regard is not necessarily reciprocated. Despite all the good in him, he is tied to monetary interests, and since his expectations differ from those of the others, his speeches are out of tune with theirs: "I feel I want to tell you something nice and cheerful," he tells them shortly before leaving them in act

Gayev: Yes, and now the orchard's to be sold to pay our debts, unlikely as it may sound.

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one. "...If you divide the cherry orchard and the land along the river into building plots and lease them out for summer cottages..." etc. (p. 158). He speaks of leasing lands, whereas they talk about the past and sentimental attachments. The irony of this situation lies in Lopakhin's eagerly made plans for the profit, future security, and rescue of his friends, for these plans destroy the very fabric of the life with which he is enchanted. He is disgusted by its mismanagement, but enchanted nevertheless. It is interesting to note that although he means to rectify what has gone wrong, to dispel ideas which are no longer applicable, he cannot bring himself to manage his own life in the way in which he manages estate dealings. His sentimentality and tenacity are of no use to him in strictly personal concerns, as in his desire to make himself a cultured man: "It's true my father was a peasant, but here I am in my white waistcoat and brown boots....I am rich....but when you get down to it I'm just another country bumpkin. I was reading this book and couldn't make sense of it. Fell asleep over it" (p. 145). Curiously enough, here we have a man who wants to better himself, but whose intellect is dulled; he forces others to accept change but cannot force change upon himself. His relationship to Varya is full of similar ambivalence, for he admits that he does not know the reason for his hesitation, yet he hesitates, and rejects her all the same. He is a catalyst, forcing others to react to self-deception when he cannot react himself.

Lopakhin, like Ranevskaya and others, feels something alter in his life: delusion, ignorance, understanding. A sound is heard from far away--"*It seems to come from the sky and is the sound of a breaking string*" (p. 171)--as the characters sit all together out in the meadow. Firs mutters about the past when "everyone was very pleased, but what they were so pleased about they'd no idea themselves" (p. 168). Others lament the present, when they are distressed and troubled, but why they do not know. Trofimov, the perpetual student, surmises that perhaps human beings are unsuited for happiness: "what's the sense of it anway, if in fact man is a pretty poor physiological specimen and if the great majority of the human race is crude, stupid, and profoundly miserable? It's time we stopped admiring ourselves. The only thing to do is work" (p. 169). He argues that by talking, we delude ourselves, yet even in his talk, there are comic elements. Perhaps this explains why Chekhov always undercuts the characters'

to self-deception when he cannot react himself.

Lopukhin, like Panaurovskye and others, feels something alter in his life: delusion

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [

philosophizing, because such philosophy is self-delusion. The tedium and the suffering will continue, along with the humour. And so Lopakhin observes that "we...ought to be real giants" (p. 170), but we are not. We are less due to our own shortcomings, as well as due to things beyond our control. Things snap in us and snap in places we do not know, but we must learn to accept the absurdity of broken threads. As solemnity settles over a group of people thinking about their lives, a Yepikhodov crosses the stage strumming a guitar, and, most likely, playing a bad note. A snapped string can bring no less than a smile too. And despite their feelings of certain despair, Ranevskaya and Gayev may find that they feel freer when they leave the cherry orchard for the last time. They intimate that men strive to know too much, that they look for meaning where they need only be concerned with matter. "We know much too much," says Masha in The Three Sisters (p. 84), yet, at the conclusion of that play, she is like Andrei, her brother, who wonders, "Why is it we've hardly started living before we all become dull, drab, boring, lazy, complacent, useless and miserable?" (p. 188). Chekhov offers no remedy to boredom but work and resolve, but in highlighting the dangers and ridiculousness of self-absorption, he sanctifies the integrity both of man's struggle--however pitiful or comic it may be--and of human beings' particular desire to know themselves. In his plays, he seems to advise both character and audience to endure, and smile wryly along the way.

philosophizing, because much philosophy is self-delusion. The tedium and the suffering will continue, along with the humour. And so Lopakhin observes that "we...ought to be real giants" (p. 170), but we are not. We are less due to our own shortcomings, as well as due to things beyond our control. Things sway in us and snap in places we do not know, but we must learn to accept the absurdity of broken threads. As solemnly settles over a pit full of people thinking about their lives, a Yepikhodov crosses the stage murmuring a quiet, and most likely pleasing but not more. A snapped string can bring no less than a smile too. And despite their feelings of certain orphaned for the last time. They insinuate that was easy to have too much. Hardly does for meaning where they need only be concerned with matter. 'We have work too much,' says Masha in The Three Sisters (p. 91), at the conclusion of that play, she is like Andrei. So brother, who wonders, "Why is it we've barely started living before we all become dull, drab, boring, lazy, complacent, useless and miserable?" (p. 189). Chekhov offers no remedy to boredom but work and resolve, but in highlighting the dangers and ridiculousness of all-absorption he sanctifies the integrity both of man's struggle—however pitiful it may be—and of human inner particular desire to know themselves in his plays, he seems to advise both character and audience to endure, and muster up a long the way.

3

Bernard Shaw

The conflicts which Shaw examines in some of his plays are those which man imposes on himself and on others; in fact, Shaw tends to put more emphasis on the defeat of one's expectations about others than on either the defeat of one's expectations about one's self or the influence of exterior forces. Like Ibsen, he analyzes and attacks the hypocrisy of society and outmoded ideas, as well as the subordination of the individual to society and its ideals. Yet in Shaw's plays, society has less "force" than "influence," and the ideas which it expounds are not so much cankerous as stagnant. As a result, his plays lack the Naturalism of some of Ibsen's earlier works; they also do not examine the vacillations of hope, worry, and despair as Chekhov's plays customarily do. However, in depicting the thoughts and actions of men who find that their expectations of others are unfounded, Shaw affirms some basis for reality which is stronger than that of Ibsen or Chekhov. He also shows how one's opinions of others are a form of self-deception. Thus when a character discovers how others fall short of his expectations of them, or when he begins to doubt those opinions and attitudes which he has come to expect in human relationships, he realizes that his own self-worth is called into question. "There are so many things to make us doubt, if once we let our understanding be troubled," Morell tells Marchbanks in the first act of Candida (p. 228).[1] A distinction can be made here between man's opinions of his own life and the faith that he has in himself, faith that is vulnerable to others' opinions. The two are certainly not synonymous, and Shaw reveals the friction between them by showing how each is both cause and result to the other. And yet such a conflict between the circumstances of others' opinions and the response of a single character is comic. Self-deception is played for a laugh by Shaw, for he recognizes that men, in attempting to incorporate their world and society with their views, confuse what is purposeful with what is desirable. When Morell condescends to tell Marchbanks that he is being a fool by

The conflicts which Shaw examines in some of his plays are those which men impose on himself and on others; in fact, Shaw tends to put more emphasis on the defeat of one's aspirations about others than on either the defeat of one's expectations about one's self or the influence of exterior forces, like Ibsen. He analyses and attacks the hypocrisy of society and outmoded ideas, as well as the subordination of the individual to society and its ideals. Yet in Shaw's plays, society has less "force" than "influence," and the ideas which it expounds are not so much caricatures as dogmas. As a result, his plays lack the Nietzschean of some of Ibsen's earlier works; they also do not examine the vacillations of hope, worry, and despair as Chekhov's plays *normally* do. However, *in depicting the thoughts and actions of men who* find that their expectations of others are unfounded, Shaw affirms some basis for reality which is stronger than that of Ibsen or Chekhov. He also shows how one's opinions of others are a form of self-deception. Thus when a character discovers how others fall short of his expectations of them, or when he begins to doubt those opinions and attitudes which he has come to adopt in mutual relationship, he realizes that his own self-world is called into question. "There are so many things to make us doubt, if once we let our understanding be troubled." Morell tells Ibscobbe-ks in the first act of Candida (p. 559).[1] A distinction can be made here between one's opinions of his own life and the faith that he has in himself, faith that is vulnerable to others' opinions. The two are certainly not synonymous, and Shaw reveals the friction between them by showing how each is both cause and result to the other. And yet much a conflict between the circumstances of others' opinions and the response of a single character is comic. Self-deception is played for laughs by Shaw, for he recognizes that we...in influence of exterior forces, like Ibsen. He analyses and attacks the hypocrisy of society and outmoded ideas, as well as the subordination of the individual to society and its ideals. Yet in Shaw's plays, society has less "force" than "influence," and the ideas which it expounds are not so much caricatures as dogmas. As a result, his plays lack the Nietzschean of some of Ibsen's earlier works; they also do not examine the vacillations of hope, worry, and despair as Chekhov's plays *normally* do. However, *in depicting the thoughts and actions of men who* find that their expectations of others are unfounded. Shaw affirms some basis for reality which is stronger than that of Ibsen or Chekhov. He also shows how one's opinions of others are a form of self-deception. Thus when a character discovers how others fall short of his expectations of them, or when he begins to doubt those opinions and attitudes which he has come to adopt in mutual relationship, he realizes that his own self-world is called into question. "There are so many things to make us doubt, if once we let our understanding be troubled." Morell tells Mrscobbe-ks in the first act of Candida (p. 559).[1] A distinction can be made here between one's opinions of his own life and the faith that he has in himself, faith that is vulnerable to others' opinions. The two are certainly not synonymous, and Shaw reveals the friction between them by showing how each is both cause and result to the other. And yet much a conflict between the circumstances of others' opinions and the response of a single character is comic. Self-deception is played for laughs by Shaw, for he recognizes that we...in with what is desirable. When Morell confesses to tell Mrscobbe-ks that he is being a fool by

declaring his love for Candida, the poet asks, "Do you think that the things people make fools of themselves about are any less real and true than the things they behave sensibly about? They are more true: they are the only things that are true" (C, p. 221).

The comedy and satire of Shaw's plays derive from his assertion that there are indeed matters about which men should behave sensibly; the world which his characters inhabit was created fundamentally good, although the characters do not seek the good because of their ignorance, outmoded ideas, abstract notions of love, and idealistic views about other people. As stated above, such outmoded ideas do not necessarily impinge on the individual man; they may cloud his vision so that, in following the practises of his faith and idealism, he suppresses another man. Besides finding an outlet in social hypocrisy, ideals and ignorance also deflect man from a true understanding of the purpose of his life. It is interesting that Shaw's description of such life purposes, which are the vestiges of the goodness of the environment in which man could live, are themselves idealistic; still, they differ from the ideals of specific characters in that they are the product of self-deception. They are realized by man when he attains a full consciousness of his actions, if we are to believe Shaw when, in the preface to Man and Superman, he declares that a singular purpose, like the purpose of literature, is the product of "the struggle of life to become divinely conscious of itself" (MandS: p. 500). Later in the preface, he elaborates upon his notion of purpose, which is,

> the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as almighty one...the being a force of Nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy. And also the only real tragedy in life is the being used by personally minded men for purposes which you recognize to be base. All the rest is at worst mere misfortune or mortality...
>
> [MandS: p. 510, 511]

In Man and Superman, the purpose, the "Life Force," is the ideal for which man and woman must strive, and Shaw gives us a clear sense of how one ought to sacrifice one's self to such a purpose, such a "force of Nature." Of course, Shaw realizes that ordinary men cannot aspire to such a purposes, for the human instinct tends to undermine the ideal. Such is the case

declaring his love for Candida they say, "Do you think that the things people make fools of themselves about are any less real and true than the things they behave sensibly about? They are more true: they are the only things that are true" (*C*, p. 321).

The comedy and farce of Shaw's plays derive from his assertion that there are indeed matters about which men should behave sensibly; the world which his characters inhabit was created fundamentally good, although the characters do not seek the good because of their ignorance, outmoded ideas, abstract notions of love, and idealistic views about other people. As stated above, such outmoded ideas do not necessarily impinge on the individual man; they may cloud his vision so that, in following the practices of his faith and idealism, he suppresses another man. Besides finding an outlet in social hypocrisy, ideals and ignorance also deflect [illegible] from a true understanding of the purpose of his life. It is interesting that Shaw's description of such life purposes, which are the results of the goodness of the environment in which man could live, are themselves idealistic still; they differ from the ideals of specific characters in that they are the product of self-deception. They are realized by man when he assume a full consciousness of his actions; if we are to believe Shaw when, in the preface to Man

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In Man and Superman, the purpose, the "life force," is the ideal for which man exists

in Man and Superman, although there the description of the instinct is often satirical. The satire in Shaw's plays, and the humour in general, show a certain duality in his thinking, for although Shaw affirms that man should be able to bring the better into existence, he acknowledges that such idealism, howevermuch it may be sanctioned by the natural order, is also a form of self-deception. And so, even in the argument of the plays, we see a conflict between the "Life Force" and death, between the emphasis on reform of old ideas and the submission to the natural purpose. Submission--not to old ideas but to forces which demand full intellectual consciousness and understanding is usually the end result of action, for as Captain Shotover laments in Heartbreak House, "I feel nothing but the accursed happiness I have dreaded all my life long...the happiness of yielding and dreaming instead of resisting and doing." He feels that this yielding is like "the sweetness of the fruit that is going rotten" (HBH:p. 568), for which a Chekhovian character causes himself to suffer, for which a character of Ibsen might bring more ruin on himself. Shaw argues humorously that the only rotten bit is man's ignorance, or desire for destruction.

Shaw is not above making light of his own belief in progress or his disgust with entrenched ideas, and he consistently shows the dichotomy of his arguments by including them in the humour of a play. We may find one or several of his characters spouting forth Shavian philosophy, only to be tempered by a more pragmatic character (usually female) whose effectiveness of control regulates the enthusiasm of the deluded characters while she illustrates the tenets of their ideals by her actions. Thus in Candida, we see how Candida herself oversees the actions of Morell and Marchbanks, appeases them, allows them to be deluded so long as they do not grow ridiculous, and keeps herself in line with the progressive ideal. It may be Morell who says that, "God has given us a world that nothing but our own folly keeps us from being a paradise" (C:p. 222), but it is Candida herself who is closest to realizing the extent of her self-deception, not Morell. Her comments and actions draw out the absurdities of the men in her life; we are meant to share her amusement, yet we also discern the humour in her own character. She is one who, at first, tolerates the philosophizing of her husband and the infatuation of Marchbanks, but her determination and manipulativeness reveal her own

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might bring more ruin on himself. Shaw agrees humorously that the only notion but is means 599), for which a Chekhovian character *cause himself* to suffer, for which a character of Ibsen thing." He feels that *playwriting is like Shaw's means of the train to bring notice.*" (Bell p.

have dreaded all my life long. The happiness of yielding and dreaming instead of restraining full intellectual consciousness and *understanding* is usually the end result of action, for as Captain Shotover laments in Heartbreak House "I feel nothing but the accursed happiness I submission to the natural purpose. Submission--not to old ideas but to forces which demand *between the "Life Force" and death. between the emphasis on reform of old ideas and the* also a form of self-deception. And so, even in the argument of the plays, we see a conflict acknowledge that such ideas, however much it may be sanctioned by the natural order, is although Shaw affirms that man should be able to bring the better into existence. he *sees in Shaw's plays, and the humour in general, show a certain duality in his thinking. for in Man and Superman, although there the description of the instinct is often sensitive. The*

expectations of life. Her opening line, "Say yes, James" (p. 213), shows her command of the man in her life, as well as the "amused maternal devotion" which Shaw describes as "her characteristic expression" (p. 213). She, in turn, shows the others how inappropriate and inapplicable their own expectations--about her and her relation to them--are. Morell becomes more and more troubled by Marchbanks's accusations and by his wife's declaration that she is not all goodness and purity, and Candida reflects, "This comes of James teaching me to think for myself, and never to hold back out of fear of what other people may think of me. It works beautifully as long as I think the same as he does" (p. 243). In truth, she thinks more practically than he does; she has a truer sense of proportion, a truer sense of the world.

When Shaw redefined the standards of behaviour and response of Ibsen's Doll House, he gave the woman control of the house, as well as the keen intelligence and pragmatism. The husband figure remains somewhat tyrannical and perpetually deluded, but he defers to his wife, who is idealized not so much because of her complementing role as because of his supposed control of her character and her maternal concern for him. The source of Morell's troubles lies in his overestimation of his influence, for he is dismayed by feelings of inadequacy, not simply by the attentions Candida shows to Marchbanks. She preserves him, and so when he learns that Marchbanks thinks that Candida is being stifled in her service to her husband, he says angrily, "It is easy--terribly easy--to shake a man's faith in himself. To take advantage of that to break a man's spirit is devil's work" (p. 222). Yet the faith he has in himself comes from the opinions that he thinks others hold of him. He is grieved to learn that he has misunderstood others' regard, and to hear the truth from his wife is especially demeaning for him, since he begins to realize that he has also misunderstood the quality of her regard. In talking of some recreational churchgoers, Candida tells him, "James, dear, you preach so splendidly that it's as good as a play for them. Why do you think the women are so enthusiastic?" Morell is shocked at her statement, but she goes on: "Oh, I know. You silly boy: you think it's your socialism and your religion; but if it was that, they'd do what you tell them instead of only coming to look at you" (p. 240). All of his high flown ideas are knocked down, subordinated to physical attraction. Although he is shocked by Candida's admission, he still deludes himself even as he grows to

Although he is shocked by Candida's admission, he still deludes himself even as he grows to [illegible] her romantic temperament (eventual) and [illegible] for he desires (via his) who is idealized not so much because of her complementing role as because of his supposed control of her character and her maternal concern for him. The source of Morell's troubles lies in his overestimation of his influence, for he is dismayed by finding [illegible], not simply by the attention Candida shows to Marchbanks. She perceives this, and so when he leaves that Marchbanks thinks that Candida is being stifled in her service to her husband, he says angrily, "It is easy--terribly easy--to shake a man's faith in himself. To take advantage of that to break a man's spirit is devil's work" (p. 282). Yet the truth he has in himself comes from the opinions that he thinks others hold of him. He is grieved to learn that he has misunderstood others' regard, and to bear the truth from his wife is especially demeaning for him, since he begins to realize that he has also misunderstood the quality of her regard. In telling of some recreational churchgoers, Candida tells him, "James, dear, you preach so splendidly that it's as good as a play for them. Why do you think the women are so enthusiastic?" Morell is shocked at her statement, but she goes on: "Oh, I know. You really don't think it's your salvation and your religion, but it was that, they'd do what you tell them instead of only coming to look at you" (p. 290). All of his high flown ideas are knocked down, subordinated to physical attraction.

doubt the surety of his place in her love, for his faith in himself is shaken as is his faith in his wife. She is careful to tell him, "Put your trust in my love for you, James, for if that went, I should care very little for your sermons--mere phrases that you cheat yourself and others with every day" (p. 242). He, however, cannot abandon his love for sermons; he cannot trust her. Instead, he allows Marchbanks to run him down and suffers "the misery of doubt"; self-doubt has not brought self-recognition for him. Despite all his idealistic sermons concerning the regeneration of man, he never achieves that consciousness of self which Candida has. It is for these reasons that Candida gives herself "to the weaker of the two" (p. 265). She is the light and the guidance for one who is still deluded.

In contrast to Morell, Marchbanks is "stronger" because he realizes the absurdity of his idealization; while Morell expects more of himself, Marchbanks expects much of Candida, the vital, intelligent woman. Candida is certainly not the woman he imagines her to be, for she cannot be tied to either Marchbanks's romantic ideals or to her husband's moral doctrines. When Marchbanks attacks Morell for stifling his wife's mind, he describes Candida as "A woman, with a great soul, craving for reality, truth, freedom, and being fed on metaphors, sermons, stale perorations, mere rhetoric" (p. 228), yet such is the measure that he wishes to give to her. More importantly, such is the measure that he wishes her to sustain in him. As much as he wishes to save her from Morell's ideas, he has only the most abstract notions of love to give to her. He really wants her to save and preserve himself. His delusion is therefore compounded by his lack of self-knowledge; as a result, youthful impetuosity and strong-headedness combine to make him an insistently comic character. Shaw takes care to show how the fancies of a poet disregard reality as much as the sermons of the preacher disregard it, and he does so by setting Marchbanks's idealizations against Candida's practicality. In the second act, Marchbanks is shocked to discover that Candida cleans boots; Morell, resting fairly comfortably in the routine with his wife, is not concerned. She tells him, "James: you've not been looking after the house properly."

> Morell: What have I done--or not done--my love?
> Candida [*with serious vocation*]: My own particular pet scrubbing brush has been

"James: you've not been looking after the house properly."

Morell, resting lazily comfortably in the routine with his wife, is not concerned. She tells him; reassuringly. In the second act, Marchbanks is shocked to discover that Candida cleans boots: shocked it, and he does so by setting Marchbanks's idealizations against Candida's show how the fancies of a poet disregard reality as much as the sermons of the preacher strong-headedness combine to make him an insistently comic character. Shaw takes care to compounded by his lack of self-knowledge: as a result, youthful impetuosity and to give to her. He really wants her to save and preserve himself. His delusion is therefore much as he wishes to save her from Morell's ideas, he has only the most abstract notions of love give to her. More importantly, such is the measure that he wishes her to sustain in him. As sermons, stale platitudinous, mere rhetoric" (p. 253), yet such is the measure that he wishes to women, with a great soul, craving for reality, truth, freedom, and being fed on metaphors. When Marchbanks attacks Morell for stifling his wife's mind, he describes Candida as "a cannot be tied to either Marchbanks's romantic ideals or to her husband's moral doctrines. vital, intelligent woman. Candida is certainly not the woman he imagines her to be, for she idealization; while Morell experiences more of himself, Marchbanks expects much of Candida, the

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close reasons that Candida gives herself "to the weaker of the two" (p. 253). She is the light and has not brought self-recognition for him. Despite all his idealistic sermons concerning the regeneration of man, he never achieves that consciousness of self which Candida has. It is for nearly day" (p. 246). He, however, cannot transform his love for sermons; he cannot trust her. instead, he allows Marchbanks to run him down and writes "the misery of doubt": self-doubt

Candida: I wish [a long reflection]: My own precious pet, something [much has been
Morell: What have I done—or not done—my love?

> used for blackleading. [*a heartbreaking wail bursts forth from Marchbanks....Candida rushes to the sofa*]. What's the matter? Are you ill, Eugene?
>
> Marchbanks: No, not ill. Only horror, horror, horror! [*he bows his head on his hands*].
>
> [p. 286]

Marchbanks's pretences are pointed out by means of humour, so that we question the judgement in his speeches later on in the play, even if such speeches are not directly comical. He is easily carried away by fancy, yet we find at the conclusion of the play that he has matured with the realization that Candida's settlement with Morell is a just one. Idealization develops into maturity. Thus like Morell, he seeks strength from Candida, but, unlike Morell, he comes to recognize the implications of his quest. The play concludes with Candida and Morell's embrace, while "they do not know the secret of the poet's heart" (p. 268). And we see that through the conflict between speaking as if he wished to preserve Candida from oppression and secretly needing such preservation for himself, Marchbanks learns to be self-sufficient to a greater extent that do either Candida or Morell, who depend on each other. Suitably enough, in challenging Morell's self-absorption and delusion, as well as Candida's love and protective instinct, Marchbanks comes to realize his own delusion. It is significant that Marchbanks, unlike some other characters in Ibsen or Chekhov, seems likely to move beyond his depair with the acceptance of the defeat of his expectations.

It might even be argued that Marchbanks realizes the nature of his purposeless life: to satisfy his calling as a poet. He does not fit in with the purpose which Candida, the central figure and controlling, creative force of the play, recognizes for herself; he is also excluded from the expression of self-sufficiency at the conclusion of the play. The sense of purpose which Candida projects in her dealings with him, and the satisfaction with which she seems to be fulfilling her purpose are important when considered with Shaw's argumentative techniques in later plays, most notably in Man and Superman, where a sense of purpose is defined in terms of the Life Force. While it might be stretching things a bit to include Marchbanks in a close analysis of the life force, we can see how, in spite of his idealism, he is drawn from Candida, who will not be his ideal, who will not steal his soul, as Ann will Tanner's. Marchbanks is, of

need for disciplining (a description which Shaw finds very true
Marchbanks...Candida rushes to the scene). What's the matter? Are you
ill, Eugene?

Marchbanks: [in an ecstasy of horror, horror, horror!] He knows his doom!
[p. 89e]

Marchbanks's pretences are pointed out by means of humour, so that we question the judgment in his speeches later on in the play, even though these are clearly coloured. He is easily carried away by fancy, yet we find at the conclusion of the play that he has matured with the realisation that Candida's settlement with Morell is a just one. Idealisation develops into maturity. Thus like Morell, he seeks strength from Candida, but, unlike Morell, he comes to recognize the implications of his quest. The play concludes with Candida and Morell's embrace, while "they do not know the secret of the poet's heart" (p. 88f). And we see that through the conflict between speaking as it be wished to preserve Candida from oppression and secretly reading such presentations for himself, Marchbanks learns to be self-sufficient to a greater extent that do either Candida or Morell, who depend on each other, bitterly enough, in challenging Morell's self-absorption and delusion, as well as Candida's love and protestations. Marchbanks comes to realise his own delusion. It is significant that Marchbanks, unlike some other characters in Ibsen or Chekhov, seems likely to move beyond his despair with (*See Appendix 6 for letter of Shaw explanation*).

It might even be argued that Marchbanks realises the nature of his purposelessness; or exactly his calling as a poet. He does not fit in with the purpose which Candida, the central figure and controlling creative force of the play, recognizes for herself; he is also excluded from the expression of self-sufficiency at the conclusion of the play. The sense of purpose which Candida projects in her dealings with Jim, and the satisfaction with which she seems to be fulfilling her purpose are important when considered with Shaw's argumentative techniques in later plays, more notably in *Man and Superman*, where a sense of purpose is demanded terms of the life Force. While it might be stretching things a bit to include Marchbanks in a close analysis of the life force, we can see how, in spite of his idealism, he is drawn from Candida, who will not be his ideal, who will not meet his soul, as Ann will Tanner's. Marchbanks, as

course, just as deluded as Tanner (and Don Juan) in his understanding of women, and he too works to achieve an ideal which cannot be achieved by work alone. There is a duality in these men's situations, for on the one hand, we have men stopped from achieving their ends due to a cowardice and fear, and on the other hand, we find that these men are compelled--though they do not always recognize such a compulsion--to fulfill a purpose. They are part of a system which is working toward making men better and more conscious of their existence, but personal ambition and expectations often conflict with their awareness of such a purpose.

Just as Marchbank's realization is achieved through the aid of Candida, Tanner's consciousness will be raised by Ann, though not without a fight. Tanner keeps hold of his delusion. For as much as he ascribes to a Life Force, he resists the purpose which calls him to action. Like Marchbanks, he argues that man should be able to train his mind so that he would become conscious of his life without the aid of others. Tanner, in the guise of Don Juan in the third act of Man and Superman, tells The Statue that,

> to Life, the force behind man, intellect is a necessity, because without it he blunders into death. Just as Life, after ages of struggle, evolved that wonderful bodily organ the eye, so that the living organism could see where it was going and what was coming to help or threaten it, and thus avoid a thousand dangers that formerly slew it, so it is evolving today a mind's eye that shall see, not the physical world, but the purpose of Life, and thereby enable the individual to work for that purpose instead of thwarting and baffling it by setting up shortsighted personal aims as at present.
>
> [MandS: p. 627, 628]

Of course, philosophizing is comic, for the abstract analysis of purpose and action has little application to the circumstances of Tanner's life. Certainly, he needs to have a brain trained to know the reasons why he acts as he does, to stop him from muddling through life, to restrain him from making unnecessary and costly mistakes. It is not enough for the Don Juan to conduct himself as he wishes, seek pleasure when he wants; for him, hell is a place for action, not understanding. As Shaw traces the development of the Juan figure, he marks out the development of a "moral passion" in the character, for he now seeks significance and contemplation. He seeks Heaven, the place where he can reflect on the Life Purpose for which he

> personal aims as at present.
>
> (Man, p. 827, 6-9)

for their purpose instead of thwarting and baffling it by serving up streamlined physical world, but the purpose of life, and thereby even the individual's work interesting now it is to evolving today a mind's eye that shall see, not the what was coming to help or threaten it, and thus avoid a thousand dangers that blunder into death. Just as Life, after ages of struggle, evolved that wonderful keenly open the eye, so that the living organism could see where it was going and

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personal ambition and expectations often conflict with their awareness of such a purpose which is working toward making men better and more conscious of their existence, but do not always recognize such a compulsion--to fulfill a purpose. They are part of a system of universal evolution, the place where he can reflect on the life Purposes for which he

development of a "moral passion" in the character, for he now seeks significance and not understanding. As Shaw traces the development of the Don figure, he marks out the

personal ambition, that is, the desire to control one's own destiny, and the moral passion, the desire to work for the betterment of humanity. Shaw's Don Juan is a playful satire on the traditional Don Juan figure, but it is also a serious attempt to show the development of a character who will be able to carry Don Juan's energy and vitality into a new age. Shaw's Don Juan is a character who is dedicated to the service of the Life Force, but who is also dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and self-awareness. Shaw's Don Juan is a character who is

is working. He tells the Devil, "What a piece of work is man! says the poet. Yes: but what a blunderer! Here is the highest miracle of organization yet attained by life, the most intensely alive thing that exists, the most conscious of all the organisms; and yet, how wretched are his brains!" (p. 618). Tanner differs from Marchbanks in that he feels the need to get his thoughts rectified, not simply those of others around him; ironically enough, by wanting to work for something better, he neglects to see the truth of his present state of affairs. He is thus comic because he blinds himself by his own "moral passion."

This Don Juan character is all one for ideas and tries to conceive of an idea which he will then attempt to bring into existence, but he lacks the ability to create anything real from his philosophizing. Upon achieving this stage of consciousness and frustration, he can go no further in the creation of the Superman, nor can he make himself into this Superman. He assures the Devil and The Statue that his work is for the common good, that he is abandoning selfish concerns, and yet, as mentioned above, his generalizations about the inadequacies of men damn himself. After telling the Devil that "this creature Man, who in his own selfish affairs is a coward to the backbone, will fight for an idea like a hero," he goes on to observe to Ana that "sexually, woman is Nature's contrivance for perpetuating its highest achievement. Sexually, man is woman's contrivance for fulfilling Nature's behest in the most economical way" (p. 623, 624). Shaw is ingenious here, for he can combine Juan's belief in the necessity for the Life Force with his fear of marriage, since the Life Force itself only demands regeneration, not any sanctification. In the first act, Tanner endeavours to save the romantic and idealistic Octavius from his "highest happiness," that is, from marriage to Ann: "A lifetime of happiness! No man alive could bear it: it would be hell on earth" (p. 527). The irony of such a comment is made obvious by the third act, where pleasures are happiness in hell, and where the justified pleasure, the product of the Life Force, is to be found in marriage, the "hell on earth." This situation is as it is because when the idea of the Life Force itself must be made manifest in the modern society, the hero must be called to acknowledge the customary standards of behaviour. Tanner cannot be the Don Juan of his ideals.

The third act of the play affirms, in its comic way, that one must sacrifice one's self to

is working. He tells the Devil, "What a place of work is man! says the poet. Yes! but what a blunderer! Here is the highest miracle of organization yet attained by life, the most intensely vivid thing that exists, the most conscious of all the organisms, and yet, how wretched are his circumstances! Nine tenths of his energy must be spent in getting his food and clothing; and even then he is insufficiently fed, insufficiently clothed, insufficiently housed, and overworked in the process" (p. 616). Tanner differs from Malthusians in that he feels the need to get his thoughts rectified, not simply those of others around him: ironically enough, by wanting to work for something better, he neglects to see the truth of his present state of affairs. He is thus comic because he blunders himself by his own "moral passion."

This Don Juan character is all one for ideas and tries to conceive of an idea which he will then attempt to bring into existence, but he lacks the ability to create anything real from his philosophizing. Upon achieving this stage of consciousness and frustration, he can go no further in the creation of the Superman, nor can he make himself into this Superman. He realizes the Devil was The Statue that his work is for the common good, that he is abandoning concerns, and yet, as mentioned above, his general assertions about the independence of man damn himself. After telling the Devil that "this creature Man, who in his own selfish aliness is a coward to the backbone, will fight for an idea like a hero," he goes on to observe that woman, sexually, man is woman's contrivance for multiplying Nature's beheat in the most economical way," (p. 622, 624). Shaw is ingenious here, for he can combine Juan's belief in the necessity for the life force with his fear of inertia, since the Life Force itself only demands regeneration, not any sanctification. In the first act, Tanner endeavours to save the romantic and idealistic Octavius from his "higher happiness," that is, from marriage to Ann. "A lifetime of happiness No man alive could bear it: it would be hell on earth" (p. 587). The irony of such a comment is made obvious by the third act, where pleasures are unhappiness in hell, and where the pursuit pleasure, the product of the Life Force, is to be found in marriage, the "hell on earth." The situation is as it is because when the idea of the Life Force itself must be made manifest in the modern society, the hero must be called to acknowledge the customary standards of behaviour.

Tanner cannot be the Don Juan of his ideals.

The point of the play affirms, in its comic way, that one must sacrifice one's self to

some preordained purpose; the ideal exists, not to be discovered, but to be realized. Shaw has not Three Sisters who lament their condition with "If only we knew," for knowledge, even self-knowledge, is not enough for him. Tanner may deceive himself as much as he will, and he may be shocked to hear from Staker that Ann is after him ([*wildly appealing to the heavens*] "Then I--I am the bee, the spider, the marked down victim, the destined prey" (p. 584)), but his dream shows that his submission is imminent. Once he is aware that Ann is after him, he knows that her conquest is only a matter of time. As he told Octavius in the first act, "Of all human struggles there is none so treacherous and remorseless as the struggle between the artist man and the mother woman" (p. 538). He also confirms that Ann has her purpose, "and that purpose is neither her happiness nor yours, but Nature's. Vitality in woman is a blind fury of creation" (p. 567). All of Ann's manipulative acts and tricks to make it seem as if others are making the decisions which she has already made for them are part of her "vitality" and "fury." Tanner feels that she has captured his soul, meaning that she has taken the power of will from him; she has defeated his belief in his own supremacy and independence. Of course, she does not see their struggle in such sensational terms, for she only knows that she must win him. He will grow to convince himself. It is curious to note how, once again, Shaw undermines and ridicules man's tendency to idealize woman (in the character of Octavius) and rewards her to the self-centered and philosophical man, whom she will protect just as she will use him to realize her own purpose.

As in Candida, the woman does not deceive man about her worth or skill, but she can disillusion him about his own abilities and independence. Ann observes to Octavius that Tanner "has no illusions about me. I shall surprise Jack the other way. Getting over an unfavourable impression is ever so much easier than living up to an ideal" (p. 672). She recognizes that she is requiring a sacrifice on his part, though her own crafty pursuit of him may compensate for his sacrifice. In the dream, as Don Juan leaves for Heaven, the land of contemplation, he observes, "I can find my way to Heaven, Ana; but I cannot find yours" (p. 647). She is rather annoyed and ignores the Devil's advice to "Beware of the pursuit of the Superhuman: it leads to an indiscriminate contempt for the Human" (p. 648); instead, she

her own purpose.

As in *Candida*, the woman does not deserve *man* about her worth or skill, but she can self-centered philosophical *man*, whom she will prevent *him* as she will use him to realize man's tendency to idealize woman (in the character of Octavius) and towards her to-ward to overvalue himself. It is curious to note how, once again, Shaw undermines and ridiculi-ses their struggle in such sensational terms, for she only knows that she must win him. He will *him*, she has defeated his belief in his own supremacy and independence. Of course she does not Tanner feels that she has captured his soul, meaning that she has taken the power of will from mos[ing the decisions which she has already made for them as experts of her "vitality" and "duty," creation" (p. 997). All of Ann's manipulative acts and tricks to make it seem as if others are

man and the *mother woman*" (p. 998). He also contends that Ann has her purpose. "And that purpose is neither her happiness nor power, but Nature's. Vitality in woman is a blind *will* or *human struggles* there is none so treacherous and remorseless as the *struggle* between the artist knows that her conquest is only a matter of time. As he told Octavius in the first act, "Of all dream shows that his submission is imminent. Once he is aware that Ann is after *him*, he

may be shocked to hear from Sir Arthur that Ann is after *him* (I wrongly *appending* to the *general* "Then I--I am the bee, the spider, the marked-down victim, the destined prey" (p. 998)), but his not Three Sisters who lament their condition with "If only we knew," for knowledge, even self-knowledge, is not enough for *him*. Tanner may deceive himself as much as he will, and he consemplation, he observes, "I can find my way to Heaven. Any fool can find yours" (p. 641). may compensate for it is escrito. In the dream, as Don Juan leaves for Heaven, the *land* of Super*human*, it lacks the *instrumentals* contempt for the *Human*" (p. 640), instead "the

She is rather annoyed and ignores the Devil's advice to "Beware of the pursuit of the

rushes off to find "a father for the Superman!" (p. 649). Her determination in the dream is matched by Tanner's description of her, for he says to her mother, "We all lie. We all bully as much as we dare; we all bid for admiration without the least intention of earning it....If Ann would admit this I shouldn't quarrel with her. But she won't" (p. 677). We sense from Ann's relief at the end of the play, when Tanner does not dispute their betrothal, that she bullies as much as she dares, but she has doubts all the same. Like Candida, she is an agent by whom others realize the truth or falsity of their expectations, but she is one who must struggle for a purpose like the rest. Perhaps her sacrifice lies in not being able to resist her fate. Appropriately enough, we do not learn if such sacrifices are conducive to the happiness of the characters; Shaw does not tell us what will happen as Ann and Tanner fulfill their obligations to the Life Force. This is part of Shaw's comedy. And so Tanner can say--somewhat ridiculously--at the end,

> I solemnly say that I am not a happy man. Ann looks happy; but she is only triumphant, successful, victorious. That is not happiness, but the price for which the strong sell their happiness. What we have both done this afternoon is to renounce happiness...renounce the romantic possibilities of an unknown future, for the cares of a household and a family.
>
> (p. 685, 686)

As Ann affirms, Tanner's observations are all "talking."

Shaw the reformer is very interested in describing people who sacrifice themselves to some purpose which is greater than they are, but Shaw the realist recognizes that not all purposes are conducive to a positive good. The Devil keeps telling Don Juan that only death rules existence on earth, not the Life Force, and Shaw mentions again and again in the play how much man abuses his understanding by seeking out methods of destruction. Thus it is not surprising that he sought to examine how the capacity for destruction--both of the self and of the world--affected the lives of the characters in another play. Such a theme would be out of the realm of comedy unless there were a greater emphasis on the absurdity of man's disillusionment, and so Shaw chose to write "A fantasia in the Russian Manner on English Themes," a Heartbreak House which is comic, satirical, and somewhat philosophical at the same time. In this play, characters do not follow a purpose as much as they react to a force in

same time. In this play, characters do not follow a purpose as much as they react to a force in Themes," a Heartbreak House which is comic, satirical, and somewhat philosophical as the disillusionment, and so Shaw chose to write "a fantasia in the Russian manner on English realism or comedy unless there was a Beaver ... emphasis ... on the absurdity of man's mother-in-law's description of her, for he says to her mother, "We all live. We all busily ex mucn as we dare; we all bid for admiration without the least intention of serving it.... Ann would admit that I should quarrel with her, but she won't" (p. 577). We sense from Ann's relation at the end of the play, when Jenny does not dispute their betrothal, that she realizes as much as the latter; but she has doubts all the same. Like Candida, she is an elegant woman seeking realism or falsity of their expectations, but she is one who must struggle for a purpose like the near. Perhaps her ascription has in not being able to resist her fate. Appropriately enough, we do not learn if such sacrifices are conducive to the happiness of the character: Shaw does not tell us what will happen as Ann and Tanner fulfill their obligations to the life Force. This is part of Shaw's comedy. And so Tanner can say--somewhat ridiculously--at the end,

> I solemnly say that I am not a happy man. Ann looks happy; but she is only triumphant: successful, victorious. That is not happiness, but the price for which the strong sell their happiness. What we have both done this afternoon is to reconcile happiness...to us the romantic possibilities of an unknown future: for the sake of a household word. Misalliance.
>
> (p. 656, 658)

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Shaw the reformer is very interested in describing people who sacrifice themselves to some purpose which is greater than they are; but Shaw the realist recognizes that not all purposes are conducive to a positive good. The Devil keeps telling Don Juan that only death rules existence on earth, not the Life Force, and Shaw mentions again and again in the play how much than abuses its understandingly, seeking our methods of destruction. Thus it is not surprising that he sought to examine how the capacity for destruction--both of the self and of the world--affected the lives of the characters in another play. Such a theme would tie the

the background; we get the sense that reacting to the effects of such a force is not always good, for it can challenge one's faith in one's self. Such a notion is reminiscent of Chekhov, as Shaw intends it to be, and yet Shaw only wishes to write "in the Russian Manner." As a result, he creates characters whose ideals are also shattered not only by forces beyond their understanding and control, but by themselves. They destroy their own expectations of themselves, as it were, and all this destruction is done seemingly independent of the war which continues in the background. "You cannot make war on war and on your neighbour at the same time. War cannot bear the terrible castigation of comedy, the ruthless light of laughter on the stage" (HBH:p. 486), observes Shaw in the preface to the play. The audience should be conscious of the implications of the war, but the characters themselves go on with their troubles, their heartbreaks and revelations, until the last act when the terror and thrilling shock of war imposes itself on them. Ironically enough, this war is the basis of reality which the play affirms--albeit comically--not a state of higher consciousness, as in Man and Superman. Heartbreak House is a play in which the futility of a circumstance compounds the futility of characters' expectations.

As stated above, however, the comedy of the play lies in the character's attempts to justify their lives, and they do indeed shatter their own self-developed ideas about what they want to be. They expect those around them to play a part in fulfilling their expectations, and yet they also tend to see through the vain hopes and expectations of others in the very act of deceiving themselves. Shaw's attack on ideas and ignorance is carried into something very near satire, especially in characters like Captain Shotover and Hector. Hector, for example, is a man who lives by lying, by telling others the romantic stories that they want to hear. Ellie is taken in by his guise, and his wife is both amused and tolerant of his behaviour. Yet he too needs such romantic stories to survive. He fights imaginary battles, asks imaginary women if they love him. In a stage direction in act one, Shaw describes Hector's actions when left alone:

> *He fights a desperate duel with an imaginary antagonist, and after many vicissitudes runs him through the body up to the hilt...He looks straight into the eyes of an imaginary woman; seizes her by the arms; and says in a deep and thrilling tone,* 'Do you love me!' *The Captain comes in at this moment, and*

> [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

Hector, caught with his arms stretched out and his fists clenched, tires to account for his attitude by going through a series of gymnastics exercises.

[p. 525]

On the whole, he is a man who plays at being the ideal hero, yet he recognizes his shortcomings, for he knows that he is not the man he pretends to be. He knows that women are easily deluded by appearances of courage and romantic love and tells Randall not to be worried about Lady Utterword's attentions to him: "Never waste jealousy on a real man: it is the imaginary hero that supplants us all in the long run" (p. 571). And again, "I must believe that my spark, small as it is, is divine," Hector tells Shotover (p. 526). For the Captain also responds to the self-recognized distinction between appearance and actuality, though Hector does not use denial and comic cynicism.

From the beginning of the play, we see that the Captain's eccentricities are encouraged, for our first sight is of the interior of his house, built to resemble the stern of a ship. In this setting, his attempts to construct a world which will separate him from others. When he first meets Ellie, he deliberately misunderstands her parentage ("Dunn! I had a boatswain whose name was Dunn. He was originally a pirate in China" (p.492)) in an attempt to be sensational, and perhaps to disguise a sign of interest in and affection for her. We sense that he does not wish to go into answers with people, and so his actions and words are governed by a carefully cultivated absurdity, as when he refuses to acknowledge his younger daughter, or Randall Utterwood: "Do you suppose at my age I make a distinction between one fellow creature and another?" (p. 516). He carries dynamite around with him and cultivates his talent for devising new ways of destruction, both of the exterior world and of himself. By showing how the Captain recognizes the futility of his actions, Shaw can demonstrate the absurdity of ideas, even something like the Life Force, in Shotover's "seventh degree of concentration," which he hopes to attain.

Hector: What's the use of that? You never do attain it.
Captain Shotover: What then is to be done? Are we to be kept forever in the mind by these hogs to whom the universe is nothing but a machine for greasing their bristles and filling their snouts?

[p. 525]

p. 2[illegible]

[illegible]

p. 2[illegible]

All his plans are undertaken because he yearns to be able to counteract the forces threatening him with destruction, but in the end, his own actions--and the world's destruction--are undercut by the irony of the "seventh degree of concentration," which is Rum. In the second act, when he is drawn to Ellie who, after her own heartbreak, is intent on providing him with the chance to dream, he observes (in a passage quoted above),

> I am too weary to resist or too weak. I am in my second childhood. I do not see you as you really are. I can't remember what I really am. I feel nothing but the accursed happiness I have dreaded all my life long: the happiness that comes as life goes, the happiness of yielding and dreaming instead of resisting and doing... [p. 568]

Ellie is disillusioned when she learns that Shotover's comfort is not philosophical thought, but alcohol, a sign of the Captain's gradual non-resistance to his world, a sign that he, like Hector before him, has not been heartbroken.

The heartbreak in Heartbreak House is less the result of unrequited or defeated love than the product of either gradual or sudden realization of some defeat or hope. It is a type of endurance, although it is more comical than the endurance that Chekhov's characters learn to cultivate. Although characters like Ellie may say that heartbreak precludes the cessation of dreams, it is "the happiness of yielding and dreaming" which the Captain speaks of. It may even involve the beginning of faith in one's self after surviving loss of faith in one's self. Shaw's heartbreak is not pitiful, nor does it necessarily involve an increase in self-awareness. It can be comic, as when Ellie learns that Hector is not what she thought he was; "Damn," she says when Mrs. Hushabye is expecting tears (p. 511). She means that she has been a fool, "I have a horrible fear that my heart is broken, but that heartbreak is not like what I thought it must be" (p. 512). She elaborates on both the quality and sensation of this heartbreak when describing Mangan, who finally breaks down in the second act: "It is a curious sensation: the sort of pain that goes mercifully beyond our powers of feeling. When your heart is broken, your boats are burned: nothing matters anymore. It is the end of happiness and the beginning of peace" (p. 561). It is

All his plans are undertaken because he yearns to be able to counteract the torments threatening him with destruction, but in the end, his own actions--and the world's destruction--are undercut by the irony of the "seventh degree of concentration," which is Ruth. In the second act when he is drawn to Ellie who, after her own heartbreak, is intent on providing him with the chance to dream, he observes (in a passage quoted above):

> I am too weary to resist or too weak. I am in my second childhood. I do not see your life [p. 69] as you really are. I can't remember what I really am. I feel nothing but the accursed happiness I have dreamed all my life long: the happiness that comes at last--the happiness of yielding and dreaming instead of resisting and doing...

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The heartbreak in Heartbreak House is less the result of unrequited or defeated love than the product of either virulent or sudden realization of some belief or hope. It is a type of anguish, although it is more controlled than the emotion that Chekhov's characters learn to cultivate. Although characters like Ellie may say that heartbreak precludes the creation of dreams, it is "the happiness of yielding and dreaming" which the characters speak of. It may even be the beginning of faith in one's self after many loss of faith in one's self. Shaw's heartbreak is not destruction--one is necessarily involve an increase in self awareness. It can be [illegible] Mrs. Hushabye is right (p. 71). It means that she has been a fool. "I have a horrible heart, my heart is broken, but that heart's not like what I thought it must be" (p. 116). the elaborate, in both the duplicity and sensation of this heartbreak when describing Mazzini who finally breaks down in the second act. "It is a curious sensation, the ache of pain that [illegible] nothing matters anymore. It is the end of happiness and the beginning of peace" (p. 181). It is inevitably beyond our powers of telling. When your heart is broken, your hopes are burned

significant that, despite the heartbreaks of these befuddled characters, no-one is laid low by them, because no-one really feels the heartbreak as much as they feel the pain of altered hopes. The curious sort of transcendence which she describes in the above speech seems to contradict her statement and Mangan's suffering, for it itself may be a sign of continued disillusionment. As "a fantasia in the Russian Manner," there is this sustained hope that there can be, if not hope for better circumstances in the future, at least an end to fluctuation and pain. In other words, the house is not one of final heartbreak, but a place where heartbreaks and disillusion occur continuously as exterior forces make their presence known or remain silent. Happiness cannot be found, even in heartbreak, and even in heartbreak things matter. "There is no blessing on my happiness," mutters Shotover, and Ellie's face lights up as she decares, "Life with a blessing! that is what I want....there is a blessing on a broken heart" (p. 587). Such a blessing is one of continual hope and disillusionment.

Heartbreak, for Shaw, involves public confrontation; a particular character may have convinced himself of his worth, but interior thoughts are constrained by circumstances which are not at all related to that character, his hopes, heartbreaks, and expectations. For these reasons, delusion results in defeat. It must, because no-one occupies a world unto himself; even conflicting arguments and characters invade Tanner's dream. Shaw does not argue that delusion is necessary in human life; he merely describes its widespread existence. He recounts the comic actions of those who labour to destroy their own expectations of themselves and others, for he sees that it is human nature to maintain delusion. "But it's not human nature to tell everybody about it," mutters Mangan. "How are we to have any self-respect if we don't keep it up that we're better than we really are?" (p. 584). In this way, Shaw, like Chekhov, shows how self-delusion destroys one just as it sustains one. "Life doesn't end," Mazzini assures Mangan in Heartbreak House, "it goes on" (p. 592), and yet characters continue to create and hold onto expectations in the hope that there will be some culminating act, some occurrence which resolves the conflicts in their lives. Each heartbreak, whether that of Marchbanks, Octavius, or Ellie, is overcome, but Shaw either describes the creation of new expectations or hints at the possibility of those creations.

possibility of those treasures.

life, is overcome. Ms. Shaw either inscribes the creation of new experiences or hints at the explanation that, despite the hardships of these feminized characters, no-one is held low by them, because no-one really feels the heartbreak so much as they feel the pain of unrealized hopes for better circumstances in the future. It seems that Shaw's characters are always looking forward to the next thing, the next experience, the next relationship, and this is the driving force behind their existence. Shaw's characters are not one of those destructive. But a place where heartbreaks and disillusion occur. As "a heroine in the Persian Manner, "there is thus unmasked hope that there can be. If not hope her statement and Morgan's suffering, for it really may be a sign of continued disillusionment and Shaw's characters suffering, for it really may be a sign of continued disillusionment

The statement out of circumstances which she describes in the above speech seem to contradict

Ironically enough, man's purpose is fulfilled only by blunders, as Tanner points out; Shotover also asserts that "A man's interest in the world is only the overflow from his interest in himself" (p. 566). By emphasizing the inherent selfishness and destructive tendencies of man's actions, Shaw raises an interesting question: can man achieve the purposes which he often fails to recognize? If Heartbreak House ends with the intrusion of a force which none of the characters can control, this does not necessarily mean that there is no reality that Shaw affirms. After the all-clear, the characters recognize their ability to take action for themselves, just as they see that there is no peace, even in heartbreak. Shaw shows that stifling of the self is unnecessary, but stifling the individual defies all capacity for self-knowledge and improvement. Yet he too, like his characters and his audience, cannot stop himself from believing that there is some chance that man's potential in life can be realized.

4

Brecht, O'Casey and Stoppard

Shaw's optimism about man's potential to alter the circumstances under which he lives is qualified by his increasing awareness of the influence of exterior forces on human life; idealism is undercut at all costs, but Shaw recognizes that its existence often mitigates the torment of self-realization, the recognition of man's relative insubstantiality in an essentially impersonal world. There are no heroes; there are no tragic characters. We would expect, rightly, that the next step after Shaw's dramatization of human potential and human foibles is the incorporation of the concepts of potentiality and defeat into a form of drama which will strive to unite these two features in a more argumentative vein. Shavian philosophy suggests problems, elaborates on causes, and reaches toward a future whose quality is not precluded by past muddles and failures. Other dramatists move beyond mere suggestion and create conflicts the truth of which they do not attempt to persuade, but set before the audience and the reader as aggressively as they would a dialectical argument. Again, we have very little in the way of resolution of conflict, of the meaning and significance of experience, but we also begin to see a lack of any underlying order or purpose to the world which the characters inhabit and in which they also believe. We move beyond the conflict between the individual and society of Ibsen, the endless searchings for meanings in Chekhov, even beyond the anti-heroism of Shaw into the realm of the experience which unfolds and manifests itself in conflict as we apprehend the significance of the way of life set before us.

Brecht, in Mother Courage and her Children and The Good Woman of Setzuan, O'Casey, in Shadow of a Gunman and The Plough and the Stars, and Stoppard, in Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead, are grouped together here because they often share this concern with the representation of reality which is argued, not merely suggested. To put this another way, one is aware that the structure and development of their plays encourage their audiences to respond to

Breslin, O'Casey and Stimpson

the ideas represented, not necessarily to the feelings portrayed by the characters. Like the playwrights already examined, these dramatists describe characters' lives which are complicated by delusion, they emphasize optimism which is undermined by reality, they concentrate on the destruction inherent in the conflict between personal aims or desires and impersonal forces. In their plays, however, the impersonal forces tend to be social, "spiritual," or militaristic structures which, while they give a sense of structure to men's lives, disturb men's attempts to seize control for their own ends. We get a very clear sense that these playwrights can argue that the conflict between characters' desires for causes to support or socially unifying principles to follow and their self-centered passion to distinguish themselves are futile. Perhaps each play lacks a resolution because the audience must act out the consequences of life itself. Thus Chekhov may imply that man's greatest response to despair or frustration is found in the ability to endure, but, in the plays examined in this chapter (and especially in those of Brecht) even the endurance of man, in self-delusion or in self-awareness, is ridiculous, pathetic. Characters may recognize that they need only respond to stimuli, but they fail to apply such recognition to the lives which unfold for them. In this failure, we may have evidence of the playwrights' belief in man, for although they may say that he is no-one special in an increasingly mechanized world, the battles of the characters against such ideas and actualities which the playwrights describe may show the intent of such a dramatic method. Perseverance may lead man somewhere, even though it will not illuminate the lives of the characters. They are role-players, but we need not be.

The breakdown of the belief in the order and sanctity of authority is very much a part of the emphasis on perseverance in these plays, for without a benificent God, or without competent generals or what-not, individual man can do little else but persevere. However, the plays which I examine all convey the sense that man does not control himself well in the conflict he has with society, a lack of control which is hardly surprising since the order of society is a sham as well. Such concern for the lack of interior and exterior control also illustrates the depths to which the characters must go in their attempts to survive. Anti-heroism becomes important when a character feels neither compassion nor generosity

motivation becomes important when a character feels neither interaction nor freedom. Illustrate the depths to which the characters must go in their attempts to survive. Similarly to a client we well. Such concern for the lack of interest and emotive control else conflict be has with, consider a lack of control when it lacks' comparing since the order to picks which I examine all convey the sense that mean does not control burnout well in the tomation [illegible] when-not. motivational men can do little elsewhere [illegible] personal. However, the emphasis on perseverance in these plays, for without a confident deed or various characters. They are role-players, but we need not be.

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-ual examples when the playwrights describe how the intent of such a dramatic method [illegible] general in an interesting method with the notion of the characters' [illegible] have evidence of the playwrights' belief in man, for strongly, they may explain, be is no-one [illegible] to apply such recognition to the lives which unfold for them. In this sense, we may [illegible] spectacle. Characters may recognize that they need only respond to stimuli, but [illegible] especially in those of Pirandello, even the awareness of man, in self-delusion, or in self-awareness, [illegible] tension is known in the ability to survive, not, in the [illegible] mentioned in this chapter (and [illegible] Waiting for Godot). Time Checklist may motivation man's reason, [illegible] slip-up of [illegible] the role Time Checklist may motivation man's reason, [illegible] slip-up of use futile. Terrance each play lacks a resolution because the audience must see the socially marginalized to follow and their self-centered position to distinguish themselves playwrights can argue that the conflict between characters' desires for causes to support or man's attempts to seize control for their own ends. We or a very clear sense that these [illegible] structures which while they give a sense of structure to man's lives, destroy interpersonal forces. In their plays, however, the importance to these tensions be tested. "plotting" complicated by delusion, they emphasize optimism which is undermined by reality, then concentrate on the destruction inherent in the conflict between personal aims or desires and playwrights already mentioned these dramatists describe characters' lives which are the ideas represented not necessarily to the feelings portrayed by the characters. Like the

for others, when he only aims at self-preservation. Brecht depicts these values more than O'Casey, and certainly more than Stoppard, for he continually examines the needs of the self as they are set against the feelings which one has towards others. He breaks down the basis of authority--though he does not destroy its presence--to such an extent that the personal lives of the characters become inconsequential in comparison to the greater scheme. The morality of this scheme does not recognize the difficulties and aggression necessary for personal survival; such lack of recognition is of course ironic, since aggression is encouraged by the imposition of forces hostile to the individual. The cycle of cause and effect is limitless, insolvable. The exterior forces function regardless of the individuals who are forced to operate under them, yet Brecht shows how these very forces are degenerating too. By far the greatest irony is the perpetuation of belief in the value of such forces, belief in the idea that such forces may enhance to the individual. Brecht's characters seek answers where there are, by definition, no answers. There is a commanding force, but there is not authority.

The commanding force in Mother Courage and her Children is that of the Thirty Years' War, a war which offers neither answers nor authority. On the whole, deprivation of the individual occurs simultaneously with the degeneration of human conduct. In a discussion of the play, Brecht notes that his work is meant to show "that in wartime the big profits are not made by little people....war, which is a continuation of business by other means, makes the human virtues fatal even to their possessors....no sacrifice is too great for the struggle against war."[1] Certainly, Mother Courage treats the war as a business enterprise, yet she initiates and perpetuates her dependence on it. Brecht is careful to point out that the means of her livelihood must also be the means of her destruction, for she cannot feed off the disorganization and wastefulness of the war without having it feed off her own carelessness and selfishness. In the first scene, when the Sergeant is working to enlist Eilif, Mother Courage's maternal devotion wrestles against her business expertise. The Sergeant confronts her with the rashness of such an approach: "You want to live off the war, but you want to keep you and yours out of it. Is that it?" (MCandHC: p.144).[2] Indeed, this is "it," for even though Mother Courage says, "My aim in life is to get through, me and my children and my wagon" (p. 188), we anticipate that she will not

The commanding force in Mother Courage and her Children is that of the Thirty Years' War, a war which offers neither answers nor authority. On the whole, destruction of the individual occurs simultaneously with the degeneration of human conduct. The dissension of the play. Brecht notes that his work is meant to show "that in wartime the perpetrators are not made by little people ...war within is a continuation of business by other means. makes the human virtues fatal even to their possessors....no territory is too great for the struggle against war." [1] Certainly, Mother Courage treats the war as a business enterprise, where initiative and perseverance but dependence on fixed locations (private property) are the means to [illegible] ruin. In the Werbewagen scene, when the Sergeant is working to enlist Eilif, Mother Courage's interest increases exercise against her business expertise. The Sergeant contrasts her with the tavernes of such as Spranger. "You want to live off the war, but you want to keep you conscience out of it. Is that true?" (MC: p.144). [2] Indeed, this is "it," for even though Mother Courage says, "My motto is: live to get through, me and my children, and my wagon," (p. 186) we can interpret the will for

be able to get through with all of these things because she idealistically believes in the worth and profitability of the war to the end. Her courageousness is really cowardice, for she never ceases to testify to the munificence of war as she follows its battles and feeds off its spoils. There is special irony in her declaration that "the most beautiful plans have been wrecked by the smallness of the people that are supposed to carry them out" (p.178), for although she is speaking specifically of soldiers and their commanders, the speech could have similar application to her approach to getting through. Her relationship to her children (and to the wagon, which seems to require inclusion in that category) is wrecked by her own "smallness," just as it is ruined by the more direct influence of the war itself.

As stated above, Mother Courage does not cease to believe in the war, and even the death of her children does not destroy such a belief. Her expectations, being essentially commercial, are not challenged by the severity of the war, as are those of her children, who must confront the futility of their actions. Their idealism is re-defined by the war, which basically destroys them, because, unlike their mother, they cannot perpetuate their notions of what is due to them. In the "Song of the Great Capitulation," which Mother Courage sings in the fourth scene, she refers to each of the children in turn and describes both their expectations and ends, along with Mother Courage's own testimony to the duality of war duty:

> And they go marching with the show
> In step, however fast or slow
> And rattle off their little song:
> It won't be long.
> And then the whole thing slides!
> You think that God provides--
> But you've got it wrong!
>
> [p. 174]

The ends of the children are also anticipated at the beginning of the play, when Mother Courage has them draw crosses; of course, they all draw black crosses, and even their mother cannot quite accept the fact that doom is inevitable. For example, Swiss Cheese dies, not courageously, but ridiculously, because he will not surrender his company's cash box, contrary to Mother Courage's concept of the problem of war. She bargains too long over the cash for the wagon and

Complacency or the problem of war: Maybe despite too long even the "easy" for the wagon and
but ridiculously because he will not surrender his company's back seat, contrary to. Mother
dance except the two that down to inevitable. For example Bruce Chess-dear, not overexcitedly.
me clean drew or ocean, of course, they all drew black crooner, answer then mother cannot
Ownership the children are subscription the Lemmy, or the why, when Mother Courage

p. 174]

for pushing not it wrong.
Ah either the whole thing older.
It won't belong.
At attraction their little song.
In step, however fast or slow
Ah attraction their little song.

with Mother Courage's own testimony to the futility of war, but:

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loses her chance to save her son. In fact, she dare not recognize his body lest she betray herself and her companions. Eilif's death also calls political and personal awareness into question, because his "bravery," or cattle-stealing, which is lauded in wartime, but condemned in peacetime, undermines Mother Courage's idealism. It is perhaps significant that she can be idealistic about others when she is so pessimistic about the circumstances of her own life; Brecht may imply that the individual, when faced with an oppressive and all-pervasive social structure, is unable to respond to the challenge because he does not recognize that the animalistic approach to life which he is forced to adopt is used equally effectively and continuously by others. In other words, Mother Courage may expect unknown generals and strangers to challenge her and her family, but she is always surprised by a direct challenge to or by those close to her.

To her thinking, Swiss Cheese and Eilif should be able to overcome the challenges made to them if they are "brave" enough, if they are smart enough. Part of her knows that few have the smartness to avoid destruction; with the dumb Katrin's disfigurement and death, she must again face the fact that even smartness may not be enough. The Chaplain mentions to her that the burial of the general is an historic moment, but Mother Courage qualifies his observation by appealing to personal instance:

> To me it's an historic moment when they hit my daughter over the eye. She's a wreck, she'll never get a husband now, and she's so crazy about children. It's the war that made her dumb, too, a soldier stuffed something in her mouth when she was little. I'll never see Swiss Cheese again, and where Eilif is, God knows. God damn the war.
>
> [p. 184]

Katrin's drumming at the conclusion of the play, and her brave attempt to save the village, illustrate the value of selflessness in the cut-throat, materialistic world. She struggles, succeeds, and is shot down for both her struggle and success. An act of selflessness is ironic in a world which has destroyed all her greatest hopes, and yet Brecht makes Katrin more of an exemplar than a pathetic character. As he says in commentary to the play, "it is the war that breaks her, not her infirmity; in technical terms, the war must find something that remains to

> To me it's an historic moment when they cut my daughter from the cast. She's a week, she'll never go a weekend now, and she's so many abortions. It's the war that makes dumb toys a soldier mutilated something in her mouth when she was little. I'll never see Swiss Cheese again... and where Britt is, God knows. One more. The last.
>
> (p. 144)

Karina's drumming at the conclusion of the play, and her frantic attempt to save the village, illustrate the value of selflessness in the anti-theatre, materialistic world, the struggles, successes, and ultimate down for both, her struggle and success, an act of selflessness is ironic in a world which has destroyed all her greatest hopes, and yet Brecht makes Karina more of a complex than a polemic character. As he says in commentary on the play: "It is the way the

be broken....Her saving of the city of Halle is an intelligent act. How else could it be possible to bring out what must be brought out, namely, that the most helpless creature of all is most ready to help?".[3]

Brecht displays the tension between personal and external influence here to demand that his audience reflect on the meaning of initiative and submission. As noted in the previous chapter, in Heartbreak House Shotover reflects that "a man's interest in the world is only the overflow from his interest in himself" (HBH: p. 128); Brecht brings the implications of this interest onto a new plane: man's interest in the world is independent of the world's lack of interest in man. So, while Mother Courage's children must meet the destruction of their expectations in suffering and, ultimately, death, Mother Courage herself must persevere. She never accepts the inevitability of the forces which destroy her by destroying those things which she struggles to keep around her. In her bargain with the war, she must give up as much as she takes, but the lesson is a hard one. The irony of Mother Courage's responses lies in her submission, for she accepts what must be accepted, though without the horror of a realization that Mrs. Alving must make in Ghosts. "How long won't you put up with injustice?" she asks a young, idealistic soldier. "An hour? Two hours? You see, you never thought of that, though it's very important, because it's miserable in the stocks when it suddenly dawns on you that you *can* put up with injustice" (pp. 171, 172). Her own existence affirms that she even subordinates personal desire to material gain, for although she knows that "the world needn't be like this, but it is" (p. 199), she never acknowledges the distinction between hope and actuality.

"Misfortune in itself is a poor teacher," observes Brecht in 1954. "Its pupils learn hunger and thirst, but seldom hunger for truth and thirst for knowledge. Suffering does not transform a sick man into a physician. Neither what he sees from a distance nor what he sees face to face is enough to turn an eyewitness into an expert."[4] Brecht continually examines the ways in which men respond to misfortune: Mother Courage continues to believe in the benefits which the war can give to her, even after her three children have died and she is left alone pulling her wagon; so also Shen Te in The Good Woman of Setzuan continues to believe that the gods will offer her some help and alleviate the suffering she must undergo to be a "good woman." This

to help."[6]

Brecht displays the tension between personal and universal influence late in the play and that his audience reflect on the meaning of narrative and identification. As noted in the previous chapter, in Heartbreak House Shotover reflects that "a man's interest in the world is only the overflow from his interest in himself" [HBH: p. 102]. Brecht brings the implications of this interest onto a new plane: man's interest in the world is independent of the world's 'use' or interest in man. So, while Mother Courage's children never cease the destruction of their opportunities in suffering and, ultimately, death, Mother Courage herself never perceives the inevitability of the losses which destroy her by destroying those things which she struggles hard around her. In comparing in with the war, she must give up as much as the rulers, but the lesson is a hard one. The irony of Mother Courage's tedious use in her submission, for she accepts what must be accepted, though without the horror of a destruction that like. Alving must make in Ghosts. "How long won't you put up with injustice?" she asks a young, idealistic soldier. "An hour? Two hours? You see, you never thought of that, though it's very important, because it's miserable in the house when it suddenly dawns on you that you put up with injustice" [p. 171]. Her own existence attests to the [illegible] but it is" [p. 139], she never acknowledges the distinction between hope and actuality.

"Misfortune in itself is a poor teacher," observes Brecht in 1954. "Capitalism learn[s] nothing, but seldom longer for truth and clarity for knowledge. Suffering does not automatically a rich man into a physician... Better when he sees from a distance not what he sees to be the enough to turn an adversary into an expert."[7] Brecht continually examines this ... which man is required to misfortune. Mother Courage continues to believe in the benefits which the war ... even when ... misfortune have died and obeys but attempting her ... [illegible] as Tiresias (Like Ghosts, it [illegible] continues to [illegible] the gods will ... her commitment and alleviate the ... [illegible] ... [illegible] ... [illegible]

play is especially significant because it sets out and describes those forces which are antagonistic to the individual, of which Shen Te's self-delusion is the slightest one. She responds to misfortune aggressively, as Mother Courage does as well, but unlike Courage, she recognizes the futility of trying to use misfortune to her own advantage. If her own misfortune teaches her anything, it teaches her that there can be no alleviation from suffering and hardship, because virtue and goodness cannot be actuated in the world in which she must live.

In The Good Woman of Setzuan, man cannot win because of the severity of the world conditions and because of others' avarice. Both these conditions are fixed in the play to show that survival, more than endurance, becomes Shen Te's chief concern as she struggles to keep her promise to the gods to be "good." Unfortunately, goodness is impossible, for even the gods are unrealistic. They anticipate goodness, yet as the play continues, their expectations of Shen Te and her world are called into question by the suffering that they also endure. For example, as they check up on Shen Te and her progress in her store and community, they are dismayed to learn that all is not right, for her, for themselves. They too get colds or shown signs of extreme exhaustion; in fact, their conditions worsen just as Shen Te's troubles become greater. Brecht is not describing the degeneration of the world here but is instead elaborating on an assumption that he makes early on in the play, an assumption which really serves as the foundation for the play as a whole. The gods, working under orders, originally seek out one good person in the world, since their proclamation reads, "'The world can stay as it is if enough people are found living lives worthy of human beings'" (TGW: p. 7). Ironically enough, they reason that they need only find one good person to fulfill their quest, but the conditions which they are attempting to perpetuate are fundamentally destructive of the individual. The First God mutters, "These aetheists are saying, 'The world must be changed because no one can be good and *stay* good.' No one, eh? I say: let us find one--just one--and we have those fellows where we want them" (pp. 7, 8). Two things should be noted in this speech: first, the gods are as comical as man; second, such a statement implies that life worthy of a human being does not involve easy goodness. In other words, nothing changes for the better because the world is "as it is," because there are no answers. There is only competition and misfortune.

"The place is absolutely unlivable!" comments the Third God. "Good intentions bring people to the brink of the abyss, and good deeds push them over the edge" (p. 100). Indeed, such is the case for Shen Te, who cannot follow the path of goodness and survive at the same time. Of course, it is ironic that the gods choose a prostitute as their example of the last good person in the world, for, by using such a twist, Brecht shows the depths of man's desperation to survive. And such survival is important to Shen Te even before the gods show their "mercy" to her. Because she believes that their attention to her is something of which she must prove herself worthy, she is eager to find any means to preserve her reputation for goodness while, at the same time, saving herself from being destroyed by others' demands on her goodness. After the gods tell her of their quest and of her responsibility, Shen Te begins to establish herself, only to find that her generosity is taken advantage of by other people struggling with their own misfortunes. The extended family which she finds herself supporting impinges on her goodness and causes her to face the absurdity of her expectation to be good. While acknowledging that the world is cruel, she also reflects that this world does not allow for mutual help and solace, because "the little lifeboat is swiftly sent down. / Too many men too greedily / Hold on to it as they drown" (p. 21). Conditions force her to consider herself, especially when she is in need of rent for the store, when those around her talk of arranging marriages for her, when her love fails. She creates Shui Ta to guarantee that her own interests are served, for she does feel that she has an obligation to the gods, even though they cannot help her, and she does feel that others must not know the extent of her desperation. In the courtroom scene, Shui Ta pleads his case: "I only came on the scene when Shen Te was in danger of losing what I had understood was a gift from the gods. Because I did the filthy jobs which someone had to do, they [Shen Te's dependents and assorted townspeople] hate me" (p. 104). After revealing her true identity, Shen Te tells the gods,

> to be good to others
> And myself at the same time
> I could not do it
> Your world is not an easy one, illustrious ones!
> When we extend our hand to a beggar, he tears it off for us
> When we help the lost, we are lost ourselves

"The price is inestimably immense." comments the Lord Sun. "Does it matter losing people to continue of the species, and good deeds punishable by the wife" (p. 108). Indeed, such is the case for Shen Te, who cannot follow one part of goodness and one of the other. It is impossible to continue the gods choose a pragmatic example of the best goodness in order, it is to the gods choose a pragmatic example of the best goodness in the world, for, by using such a twin, Brecht shows the depths of man's desperation to survive. And such survival is important to Shen Te even before she gets down that "misery" to her because she believes that their attention to her is something of which she must prove herself worthy; she is eager to find any means to preserve her reputation for goodness while, at the same time, saving herself from being deeply cheap' demands on her goodness. After the misfortunes. The wretched family which she finds herself supporting impinges on her goodness and causes her to lose the absurdity of her expectation to be good. While acknowledging that the world is cruel, she also reflects that this world does not allow for mutual help and solace: "the little light it is swiftly sent down. \ Too many men too greedily \ Hold on to it so close" (p. 81). Contentions force her to consider herself, especially when she is in need to help down." (p. 81). Contentions force her to consider herself, especially when she is in need to rent for the store, when those around her talk of bringing misfortune for her when her fate fails. She creates Shui Ta to guarantee that her own interests are served, for she does feel that she has an obligation to the gods, even though they cannot help her, and she does feel that others must not know the extent of her desperation. In the courtroom scene, Shui Ta pleads his case: "I only came on the scene when Shen Te was in danger: I loving what I had understood was dependents and associated was people) hate me" (p. 114). After revealing her true identity, Shen Te tells the gods:

> When we help the poor, we are lost ourselves.
> When we stand on mediocre beggar, between us all [or us
> Your world is not so easy one, illustrious ones!
> I can't proceed
> And myself at the same time.
> I quit from the poor. Because I did the filthy jobs which someone had to do, they [them. Te-

And so
Since not to eat is to die
Who can long refuse to be bad?

[p. 107]

Perhaps Shen Te's greatest delusion, which she clings to and through the conclusion of the play, is this belief in the "illustrious ones." Her actions serve as excuses for this belief; she cannot accept the fact that all are defenseless. Ultimately, this universal defenselessness redefines the terms of goodness, and such redefinition must surely be one of Brecht's purposes in the play, for he, like other dramatists, associates the defeat of man's expectations with the misapplication of terms and concepts of behaviour, whether good or not. "What if we can't help ourselves, illustrious ones?" asks Wong (p. 74); at the end of the play, Shen Te asks the gods for help in her crisis, but receives none. On the one hand, men cannot help themselves in that there are certain operative forces over which they have no control, and on the other hand, men have great difficulty restraining themselves from committing errors which will only compound their problems. Thus the misapplication of terms of conduct, of moral qualities and attributes is initiated by personal actions and responses, but such misapplications are also perpetuated by exterior forces, whether these forces be political, social, or, as in the case of Shen Te, quasi-(and comically) divine.

Brecht's emphasis on the way in which self-delusion can be compounded by exterior forces finds its way into the plays of other dramatists who, like him, juxtapose a character's search to alleviate his suffering and lack of control with the irrefutable strength of these exterior forces. O'Casey puts perhaps more emphasis on the role of delusion and idealism in people's lives than does Brecht, who preserves the balance between exterior and interior forces so that he can present his play argumentatively. The breakdown of authority is, in O'Casey's drama, the result of men's blind belief in causes, their pettiness, and the irreconcilability of their personal lives with the wars or political causes which they support. Such an argument is clarified even further by O'Casey's attitude to the cause he describes, for he does not attempt to demean the cause or remain indifferent to it, but instead wishes to show how such a cause can be corrupted by both idealism and misguided enthusiasm. More importantly, however, he

Perhaps when Jo's greatest delusion, which she clings to and through the conclusion of

wishes to show how indifferent such causes are to common men in the long run; men hang their hopes on others in their efforts to be released from their own oppressive lives and are defeated because they cannot reconcile the illusion with the sordid reality that they find. Like Brecht, O'Casey points out that "it's the civilians that suffer" in a war (TSofG: p. 111),[5] and yet such a distinction has further irony in that it reflects the destruction of those people whom the cause is meant to affect. We find traces of Ibsen in such treatments of delusion, and furthermore, like Brecht, O'Casey destroys the basis of heroism without replacing the heroism with another form of idealism which can be fulfilled. The illusion remains, as an escape mechanism, almost, and it can only destroy that which produces it.

Optimism is undercut by reality in O'Casey's plays, as in the plays of other dramatists, with an important difference. His characters may be like Hedda Gabler in that they are idealistic about the lives of others and yet are pessimistic about their own lives, but they differ from Hedda and Mother Courage and Shen Te in that they cannot respond to the demands which exterior forces--wars, political movements, and the like--make on them. Perhaps O'Casey combines the Ibsenian self-delusion and futility of action with the Brechtian disassociation of impersonal from personal life. His characters are unable to conform because they simply will not recognize that the importance which they attach to persons and events in their own lives is essentially meaningless, worthless, and self-destructive. In The Shadow of a Gunman, for example, we see how the characters preserve their ideals in an attempt to associate their own expectations with the expectations of others and thereby escape the hold which life seems to have on them. Davoren, the poet and willing receiver of others' praise and hero-worship, is, as O'Casey describes him in stage directions in the first act, one whose "efforts have been handicapped by an inherited and self-developed devotion to 'the might of the design, the mystery of colour, and the belief in the redemption of all things by beauty everlasting.' His life would drive him mad were it not for the fact that he never knew any other" (p. 79). Thus from the beginning of the play we see that the complications in characters lives come from within, as they did in Ibsen's plays, and are compounded by forces from without, as in Brecht's plays. The self-imposed poetic vision that Davoren uses is in the stages of destroying him,

plane. The self-imposed poetic vision that Dee Dee uses is in the shape of theatrical hist-
ory, acutely direct speech, and are composed highly diverse from without or in Brecht's
from the beginning of the play we see it in the compositions in characters lines come from
this would-be sum, and we're not for the fact that we never know any other." (p. 73). Here
the universal terms, and the relation to the redemption of all character among everything, like
have been, perhaps, an ill-defined and self-developed devotion to the music of Dee Dee, in
Dee-Dee's description for [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
to have in them. Dee Dee, the poet, and a small reading at street poetry and
that own experiences with the objections of others and thereby escape the hold within life
Quinton, for example, we see he is the character because their identity in an attempt to accom-
that own lives to encounter meaningless, worthless, and self-destructive. In The Shadow of a
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from Hecht and Mother Courage and Shen Te in that they cannot respond to the demands
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Quinton has Brutan irony in that it reduces the destruction of those people whom the cause
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hopes on others in their attempt to be interested from their own. Ephemeral love and are delusion
because they cannot reconcile the illusion with the actual reality that they live. Dee Dee
watches show how [illegible] such causes into confusion when the [illegible] [illegible]

although he never comes to realize this. In comparing the life of the poet, who is idealized by the people, to the lives of the people themselves, Davoren declares, "To the people the end of life is the life created for them; to the poet, the end of life is the life that he creates for himself; life has a stifling grip upon the people's throat--it is the poet's musician" (p. 107). His vision is of course a false one, for he is as stifled as others but does not realize the extent of his predicament, and yet O'Casey does not discount the argument that life's grip can create something of beauty to those fortunate enough to apprehend beauty. O'Casey may not choose to reconcile this difficulty, and so it is left to the audience to discover the degree of control that Davoren has over his own life. His vision of life assumes that he does have such control.

It is significant that we learn of the destructive tendencies of such a vision by observing the ways in which this vision destroys the lives of others around Davoren, for he encourages the idealism; others develop and preserve it until it is ruined by a confrontation with reality. When Minnie Powell tells Davoren that she believes he is a gunman on the run, he accepts such an identification because it pleases him and because, as he reflects, "Minnie is attracted to the idea, and I am attracted to Minnie. And what danger can there be in being the shadow of a gunman?" (p. 104). As in Brecht, idealism is ascribed to and undercut by human, almost animalistic instinct, which is appropriate for a man who is satisfied with being a character only in silhouette, not in substance. Others look up to him, and he, who cannot fulfill their expectations, finds at the last that he cannot fulfill his own. Minnie dies, still deluded, and Davoren observes that it is worse to live than to have died a death as pathetic as hers. Yet O'Casey makes a final claim on our reason by highlighting Davoren's preservation of his own poetic idealism at the final moment: "Oh, Donal Davoren, shame is your portion now till the silver cord is loosened and the golden bowl be broken" (p. 180). Like Brecht's characters, Davoren does not realise the truth of the circumstances with which he must function, though we, as audience, are meant to understand the implications of a life which continues in its delusions. Davoren is not a hero, nor is he the individual that others seek to glorify as a beautiful product of their society. In a sense, he is one part of the restrictive force which destroys characters like Minnie Powell; he is a reflection of the impersonal society in which

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [

she lives, because he is so blinded by fancy and idealism that he cannot see the effects which the mere acceptance of another's opinion can have. In the modern world, we are nothing if not passive in contrast to the movements generated by forces beyond our control, yet O'Casey, like Brecht, shows how passivity itself can be condemned. Man cannot act, yet his unwillingness to act may seem like acceptance of a situation, and so there is a dichotomy between action and reaction within the individual life and the life generated by the society, or the world. As we have seen, such a dichotomy is responsible for both the destruction of others around one as well for the animalistic responses which destruction, or the threat of it, generates.

In The Shadow of a Gunman, O'Casey demonstrates the trifling nature of heroism when set against a cause which destroys men just as they affirm it, for there is special irony in Minnie Powell's idealization of Davoren, who is, after all, just a petty individual living under the greater influence of the Irish struggle. O'Casey shows how men feel drawn to a cause by the expectation that conformity will ennoble them, but they, like Mother Courage, do not understand that sacrifices have to be made. "No man...willingly dies for anything" (p. 92) Davoren tells Minnie Powell; men are willing to subscribe to purposes which offer some direction to their lives, but they never cease to question the justice of sacrifice. Is it ridiculous, noble, responsible? Like Brecht, O'Casey wishes for us to recognize the implications of the irony which is apparent in The Shadow of a Gunman, although it can be seen to a greater extent in The Plough and the Stars, where we examine once again the conflict between personal desires and external obligations. Here the attack against heroism and the elaboration of the demands which the war makes on the people call to mind Ibsen's examination of duty and conflict, but O'Casey questions both the significance of duty and the practicality of human instinct. Action, reaction, and passivity are all called into question, especially in the characters' response to the speaker, The Figure in the Window, who calls them on to the fight. Fluther is roused by the speaker's comments and tells Peter,

> every derogatory thought went out o' me mind, an' I said to meself, 'You can die now, Fluther, for you've seen th' shadow-dhreams of th' past leppin' to life in th' bodies of livin' men that show, if we were without a titther o' courage for centuries, we're vice versa now!' Looka here. [*he streches out his arm under Peter's*

[illegible] is somewhat the reader's comments and this Peter.

[illegible] response to the speaker. The Figure in the Window, who tells them on to the style [illegible] and personality we will called into question, especially in the [illegible] Action, inaction, and personality we will called into question, especially in the [illegible] but O'Casey questions both the significance of duty and the practicality of human [illegible] which the war makes on the people will to mind them's examination of duty and [illegible] and external obligations. Here the attack against heroism and the elaboration of the [illegible] in The Plough and the Stars, where we examine once again the conflict between patriots [illegible] response to The Silver Tassie, although it can be seen to a greater extent, [illegible] replacement in The Shadow of a Gunman. O'Casey wishes for us to recognize the implications of the [illegible] direction to their lives, but they never cease question the practice of sacrifice. It is ridiculous. Davoren tells Minnie Powell: men are willing to subscribe to purposes which offer some [illegible] understand that sacrifices have to be made. "No man willingly dies for anything he [illegible] the greater influence of the Irish struggle. O'Casey shows how men feel drawn to a cause by the [illegible] enumeration that romantically will swindle them, but they like Minnie Powell to not [illegible] against a cause which destroys men just as they attain it, for there is special irony [illegible] Minnie Powell's idealization of Davoren, who is, after all, just a petty individual living under [illegible] responses which destruction or the unrest of it generates.

In The Shadow of a Gunman, O'Casey demonstrates the ability of heroism which [illegible] reaction within the individual life and the life generated by the society, or the world. As we have seen, such a dichotomy is responsible for both the destruction and [illegible] found one's self [illegible] seem like weaknesses of a situation, and so there is a dichotomy between action and [illegible] Beside, shows how pessimism itself can be condemned. Men cannot act for [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

face and rolls up his sleeve] The blood was BOILIN' in me veins!
[TPandTS: p. 168]

Fluther is enthusiastic about a cause in which he wishes to take no part, and his enthusiasm is itself derived from the words of a passive speaker. Both men do not examine the complications of individual initiative in a world which demands conformity, and although O'Casey does not destroy the argument that there are great things to which men must make sacrifices, the ironic words which he gives to the speaker show an ambivalence in O'Casey's own reaction to the problem: "Heroism has come back to the earth. War is a terrible thing, but war is not an evil thing....When war comes to Ireland she must welcome it as she would welcome an Angel of God!" (p. 169). O'Casey's analysis of the senselessness of a lot of the sacrifices which this war commands is shown in his placement of this speech well after that of Fluther's . It is almost as if the enthusiasm precedes the source of its creation, a sure sign that things are getting out of hand.

Appropriately enough, O'Casey also shows how characters react to signs of unrest or predicted opportunity in their personal lives, for there too, the characters seem to anticipate the arguments which will be used to rouse their instincts. Much of this anticipation is due to the characters' aggression, to their strong desires to survive the demoralization of the war and distinguish themselves if they can. This aggression is not always shown in battle, for, like Brecht, O'Casey describes the ways in which exterior forces incite aggression rather than the ways in which they employ it. The untapped aggression of the townspeople is shown in the looting which takes place after the withdrawal of the Irish army no less than in Captain Brennan's abandonment of Jack Clitheroe before the latter is dead: self-preservation is all. But the greatest example of the almost animalistic urge to preserve one's own life is seen in the futile efforts of Nora to keep Clitheroe for herself and not give him up to the war. O'Casey makes her state all the more pitiful by asserting that she does not wish to live off the war in any respect, as did Mother Courage, and still Nora must lose her husband, her unborn child, and, ultimately, herself in madness. The conflict between her desires and the world's commands is shown early on in the play when we hear that she has burned Clitheroe's draft card, for we are

given to understand that she has been competing with the army for his "service" and attention since before the play actually begins. It is here also that we see the extent to which Nora's struggles are themselves selfish ones, for even though she does have concern for her husband's welfare, she is really thinking only of herself. When he does leave her, she tells Mrs. Gogan in despair, "I can't help thinkin' every shot fired 'll be at Jack, an' every shot fired at Jack 'll be fired at me. What do I care for th' others? I can think only of me own self" (p. 184). Certainly, it is difficult to separate love from self-preservation, but Nora's end is not overly melodramatic because O'Casey does put this emphasis on her own selfish instinct. When she sees her husband retreating and carrying a wounded soldier, she cannot stop herself from pleading for his attentions once again. O'Casey contrasts her struggle with the wounded soldier's struggle to survive and thereby emphasizes the extent to which men drive themselves to destruction and the extent to which they are destroyed by forces beyond their control; the duality of human suffering and existence cannot be resolved:

> Clitheroe [*to Nora*]: Loosen me, darling, let me go.
> Nora: No, no, no, I'll not let you go! Come on, come up to our home....I look tired now, but a few hours of happy rest in your arms will bring back th' bloom of freshness again, an' you will be glad, you will be glad, glad. . . glad!
> Lieutenant Langon: Oh, if I'd kep' down only a little longer, I mightn't ha' been hit! Everyone else escapin', an' me gettin' me belly ripped ashunder!
> [p. 195]

The juxtaposition of one woman's despair with one man's suffering, as well as the juxtaposition of the suffering of those two characters with the sense of duty and obligation that Clitheroe feels, emphasizes O'Casey's concern for the complexity of human experience. We have difficulty separating the personal crisis from its manifestation in the exterior world, for, in the end, all that the characters know of their situation is despair. As an audience, therefore, we sense this despair and may seek to question the causes of it, as they have application to our own lives, but we are mostly aware of the acuteness of the suffering which results from this confrontation of personal crisis with duty. When other characters are drawn into this confrontation, and when they have conflicts in their own lives, the general lack of control in

the answer to which they are destroyed by forces beyond their control): the duality of human suffering and achievement cannot be resolved.

Clitandre [further] [illegible] me, darling, let me [illegible]

Flora No, no, no. I'm not in your bed. Come on, convent-room boom... look true now, just a few hours. Of a paper not in your name will [illegible] each [illegible]

[illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] Exercises in [illegible], we're [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible]

p. 197.

The juxtaposition of one woman's despair with one man's suffering, as well as the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] with the [illegible] and [illegible] Clitandre [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

human existence becomes clear. For example, when Bessie is shot down by a sniper's bullet, the irony of previous situations where there was helplessness or the destruction of personal expectations becomes quite pointed:

> Nora [*in a breathless whisper*]: Jack, I'm frightened. . . .I'm frightened, Jack. . . .Oh, Jack, where are you?
> Bessie [*moaning*]: This is what's afther comin' on me for nursin' you day an' night. . . .I was a fool, a fool!...[*pleading*] Nora, Nora, dear, for God's sake, run out an' get Mrs. Gogan, or Fluther, or somebody to bring a doctor, quick, quick, quick! [*As Nora does not stir*] Blast you, stir yourself before I'm gone!
> Nora: Oh, Jack, Jack, where are you?
>
> [p. 216]

Bessie's death, itself a representation of the defeat of personal initiative and action, reflects Nora's own shattered and isolated state, as, indeed, it reflects the situation of events as the characters know them. In this way, the suffering of the individual is played against a type of indifference, or dehumanization, or wholly demoralized situation which underscores that passivity which is forced upon the individual. He suffers and is made to suffer; he fails and is made to fail.

By continuing the emphasis on the duality of conflict, that is, on the complexity of characters' responses to conflicts, we may come to an understanding of the role which the individual is meant to play in society and in the greater scheme of things. But we need not neglect the ways in which the individual chooses to enhance his role; he may be an unwilling player but a fine actor. Stoppard, in Rozencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead, expands the idea of role-playing which is implicit in the plays of Brecht and O'Casey, for he shows how a concern for the roles which characters themselves play resolves the need for the examination of conflicts. The playwright can show how man needs to question his circumstances, but he can also show how exterior forces demand that characters respond to the situations in which they find themselves, regardless of the questions which are asked. And so we encounter Rozencrantz and Guildenstern who, by the very nature of their roles as supporting characters, cannot determine the significance of their lives beyond the service which they are commanded to give

p. 20).

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

to their superiors. Never having had the choice not to follow others' commands, they have difficulty forming a clear idea of what a truly independent existence is. Among endless word games and interruptions by their superiors, they describe the futility of their existence and any examination of it; they can only describe what is, not what went before or what will come after. "We don't question, we don't doubt. We perform," Rozencrantz observes to Guildenstern in the last act (RandG: p. 81),[6] but we see all through the play that they do question, that they cannot stop themselves from questioning. Human nature cannot accept the futility and impossibility of action with ease, and yet, as Stoppard points out, life is essentially a role which men must adopt, try as they might to interpret it in new and different ways. Life is circumscribed by death; a subordinate role is determined by the actions and attitudes of those in superior roles. The tragedians that Rozencrantz and Guildenstern encounter tell them that players can have no choices: "There's a design at work in all art--surely you know that? Events must play themselves out to aesthetic, moral, and logical conclusion" (p. 59). Needless to say, this conclusion is death, and yet the player's words hint at the distinction that can be made even in death between what is peculiar to the individual and what is defined by the society. Guildenstern discusses the anticipated murder of Hamlet in this respect:

> Assume, if you like, that they're going to kill him. Well, he is a man, he is mortal, death comes to us all, etcetera, and consequently he would have died anyway, sooner or later. Or to look at it from the social point of view--he's just one man among many, the loss would be well within reason and convenience. And then again, what is so terrible about death? As Socrates so philosophically put it, since we don't know what death is, it is illogical to fear it. It might be. . . very nice. Certainly it is a release from the burden of life, and, for the godly, a haven and a reward. Or to look at it another way--we are little men, we don't know the ins and outs of the matter, there are wheels within wheels, etcetera--it would be presumptuous of us to interfere with the designs of fate or even kings.
>
> [p. 88]

Their word games and confused logic all point to one end: their necessary submission to a higher order which they want to believe is a benificent one, but which is only, at the last, a dramatic order which contains them and defines their existence, even though they never come to know what such definitions are.

between what is peculiar to the individual and what is shared by the society in which one lives. Discuss the anticipated murder in Hamlet in this respect.

Thus in this Stoppard play we see a greater emphasis on external forces than on internal forces of self-deception; here, Stoppard defines his terms more narrowly than Brecht does, though he, like Brecht, deals as much with stagnation in art as in any form of political hierarchy. The stasis in this play is enforced, as mentioned above, by the emphasis on the futility of seeking answers to questions which cannot be adequately described. Questioning is futile, comic, unnecessary; it is a characteristic form of self-deception. The very act of questioning is itself an affirmation of a character's dependence on forces beyond his control, for, as Guildenstern observes, such an act, indicative of their lives, is "a fine persecution--to be kept intrigued without ever being enlightened!" (p. 81). It is significant that both characters see their trouble as a "persecution," part of which is due to their self-deception or intrigue, and part of which is due to the lack of definitions allowed to them by their superiors. For these reasons, the attempt to learn how to respond to circumstances beyond their control is a laudible, if futile one. This response is futile primarily because of its complexity, for on the one hand, we observe the isolation in which the characters operate, and on the other hand, we are very aware of the greater order under which they function. Brecht and O'Casey's characters may only recognize suffering, but Rozencrantz and Guildenstern acknowledge an uncertainty which is their suffering, because it is the only response, or reaction, that they can have. "The truth is, we value your company, for want of any other," Guildenstern tells the tragedians.

> We have been left so much to our own devices--after a while one welcomes the uncertainty of being left to other people's.
>
> Player: Uncertainty is the normal state. You're nobody special. [*He makes a move to leave...Guildenstern loses his cool.*]
>
> Guildenstern: But for God's sake, what are we supposed to *do*!
>
> Player: Relax. Respond. That's what people do. You can't go through life questioning your situation at every turn.
>
> [p. 49]

It is of course ironic that a player must make the distinction between illusion and reality for the two attendants; it is even more ironic that none of the characters is able to distinguish truth from expectation. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern find it difficult to accept their inability to "do" anything, and yet they are fairly settled in the routine of doubt, questioning, and word games.

Player: Below. Beyond. That's what people do. You don't go through life
[illegible] but to climb, not to [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]: Everything is [illegible]. Some [illegible] [illegible]
the uncertainty of [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible]
[

Uncertainty may be the normal state, in other words, and yet uncertainty itself, because it can be constant, can be a source of comfort. For example, at the beginning of the third act, Guildenstern tells Rosencrantz that he rather likes boats: "I like the way they're--contained. You don't have to worry about which way to go, or whether to go at all--the question doesn't arise, because you're on a *boat*, aren't you?" (p. 75). In this way, stasis can represent stability as well as futility; even more importantly, it can contribute to the preservation of self-deception, which, as we have seen in previous plays, can seem to lessen the effects of exterior forces.

"Life is a gamble at terrible odds--if it was a bet you wouldn't take it" (p. 87), observes the Player, and, indeed, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern find that their lives are bets which they would never have chosen to take, had they had the choice. Their whole existence is dependant on Hamlet's actions, on his own attempts at survival, and, in essence, their characters were created to serve as instruments of others' actions, instruments of fate. Brecht does not emphasize such complete isolation, although he does stress the impersonality of the world in which Mother Courage and Shen Te must live. O'Casey's characters gamble with their own idealism, and the cause which they serve is a creation of their own which will ultimately destroy them. Again, we see blurring of the lines between the processes of destroying one's self and being destroyed. However, none of these playwrights wants to offer insight into the source of suffering, uncertainty, or the continuation thereof; they merely want to present their arguments and their descriptions for consideration. In this respect, we might be able to extend the Player's metaphor a bit more to include the gamble that the playwrights take in drawing such lives. They do not need to take the bet that the source of trouble is either in exterior forces or within the individual himself. Something initiates the conflict, and the characters respond as best as they can, struggling to survive as best they can. Guildenstern, on the verge of fading away altogether from the stage where he has played his part, says emphatically, "There must have been a moment, at the beginning, where we could have said--no. But somehow we missed it" (p. 95). His earnestness is like that of so many of the other characters in that it reflects an optimism which will be immediately undercut by reality. Such optimism is not condemned, for these dramatists show that mere existence and survival is not enough; as Rosencrantz says, "If

you're not even *happy*- what's so good about surviving?" But he goes on to reflect that, "We'll be all right. I suppose we just go on" (p. 91). It is significant to note that here, people do not do such things as shoot themselves, but they are shot down instead. Survival is not as much of a choice as it seemed to be in Ibsen's plays, or even in Chekhov's plays. Instead we learn that one's expectations can be defeated because one misunderstands the rules of the game, which, as each of these playwrights seems to be saying, has no rules, or at least no rules which man can easily identify.

5

Pirandello, Williams and O'Neill

R. I. P.

While Brecht, O'Casey, and Stoppard show how the individual brings ruin or frustration on himself through self-deception and lack of self-knowledge, they also imply, through their treatment of social and political forces, that true knowledge is unobtainable. Somehow, awareness of the self and awareness of the world, in which we must exist, cannot be achieved concurrently, if at all. Change is not so certain as stasis, for the characters in these plays do not realize problems and work for change. Of course, it is one thing for a playwright to discourage the character while believing, to some extent, that the audience may be encouraged to consider problems, and another thing to discourage the character because of a belief that no change can be achieved, that no problems can be faced. The difference between these two views is slight, since one may so easily blend into the other, and yet we find a fundamental difference in the drama which each view produces. Although emphasis on the helplessness of the individual against exterior forces is found in both types of drama, when the relationship between character and audience is re-defined, and the attitude of the one is assumed in that of the other, the isolated individual becomes a particular individual. Furthermore, the drama becomes more specific, since an appeal, and not simply an argument, is made to the audience. The defeat of a character's actions and initiatives by larger forces is thus described, while such larger forces are gradually broken up into personalized units: his fellow characters in the present, the ghosts of others in his "past," the ghosts of his own past selves in other roles. As a result, self-delusion becomes the result of a misunderstanding of one's role in complex inter-relationships, and the nature of both roles and relationships is called into question.

Thus in Pirandello's Henry IV and Six Characters in Search of an Author, Williams's The Glass Menagerie and A Streetcar Named Desire, and O'Neill's Long Day's Journey into Night, we find a greater pessimism, a greater loss of faith in man and his capacity to bring about change

than we encounter in Brecht and his kind. Brecht emphasizes man's isolation from the forces which oppress him, and when Brecht does stress man's isolation from others, he uses such stress to describe the implications of an individual's lack of control. Pirandello, on the other hand, describes isolation in terms of its quality in different lives, not in terms of its quantity in other lives. In other words, while Brecht, O'Casey and even Stoppard make an effort to describe a final reality which isolates men from it and from each other, Pirandello and others break this ultimate reality down into its component parts, personalize these parts, and show how isolation results from the clash of various levels and ideas of reality. This is not to say that such an emphasis on various levels of reality is not implicit in Brecht's argument in Mother Courage, or in O'Casey's depiction of the death of Bessie in The Plough and the Stars, but it is most fully actuated in a drama which accepts delusion as fact, just as the characters accept their own opinions of reality as fact. Rozencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead is perhaps closer in concept to Pirandello's drama than are other works in the previous chapter, for we see there how word games, themselves a continuation of the illusion which separates character from character, man from man, and drama from life, preserve a feeling of loss of control. If we seek to discover the origin of such feelings of loss of control, as we were meant to seek their origins in Brecht's plays, we find that there are no answers, no solutions. As before, there is suffering. But where there is emphasis on the various levels of reality, not simply on various levels of existence and deception, there is a greater sense of inevitable destruction. In one sense, each character occupies his own world which others cannot interpret but which they can destroy, but since frustration, despair, and defeat are reflected in each isolated life, the characters compound destruction with pain inflicted on themselves and on others.

Like the characters in other plays, these characters strive to determine the cause of their suffering and analyze it endlessly, but all in vain. They struggle for definites in a world characterized by indefinites, by change and alteration. They are keen on self-preservation, but, in their unwillingness to accept change, they struggle with the realization of the roles that they must play. As a result, they search for a discipline and reject it at the same time, for their real frustration lies in being misdefined, being stuck in a category for which no amount of

self-deception, fantasy, or illusion can compensate. In Six Characters in Search of an Author, the Son tells the Manager, "it isn't possible to live in front of a mirror which not only freezes us with that image of ourselves, but throws our likeness back at us with a horrible grimace" (SC: p. 274).[1] In other words, our illusions are always in danger of being challenged by others' perceptions of reality; our "images of ourselves" are not our "likenesses," are not those images which others have of us. And yet others' perceptions are partially derived from our own views of ourselves. For this reason, such reflections "freeze" us in a definition of ourselves which does not change as our own attitudes change. Such fixation is as terrifying as it is ironic, for an imposed identity is partial fulfillment of the characters' desire for something definite in an indefinite world. It is as if illusion becomes reality, and in such a transformation, those desires which created the illusions are defeated. These are the consequences of Pirandello's masks: forms created to escape from the world, to offer a sense of identity; forms which become yet another false record of the life and the content that they contain.

In Pirandello, all masquerades are serious, whether they be organized in an unconscious attempt to deceive the self, in an earnest attempt at self-deception, or in the effort to play a joke. The consequences of the masquerade--the characters' realization of the fixation of form and its subsequent lack of relation to the content--will be the same. Such is the case in Pirandello's Henry IV, where life itself is likened to a masquerade. Shortly before the end of this play, Henry IV describes his "madness" and the masquerade which it produced and which he, once he acknowledged it, perpetuated: "This dress...is for me the evident, involuntary caricature of that other continuous, everlasting masquerade, of which we are the involuntary puppets, when, without knowing it, we mask ourselves with that which we appear to be" (HIV: p. 205). It is perhaps easiest to approach the play with the words "involuntary" and "everlasting" well in mind, for we need to see the inevitability of several levels of masquerades, the inevitability of masks and illusions. It is a significant irony in this play that men are never without masks, for if they do not wear masks of their own creation, they must wear those which others create for them. It is also significant that Pirandello opens the play *in medias res*, as it were, when the masquerade of madness is supposedly at its height; we come to understand how pervasive the

role-playing is, how all are taken in by some illusion or another in their quest for self-definition. All the characters, Henry IV included, are forced to act objectively, even though they are really only concerned with self-preservation. Belcredi, preparing to take up his part in the "cure" for Henry, recalls that fateful party, when all the characters attempted to disguise their desires behind masks of historical figures; it was obvious to others that, for Henry,

> that immediate lucidity that comes from acting, assuming a part, at once put him out of key with his own feelings, which seemed to him not exactly false, but like something he was obliged to give the value there and then of--what shall I say--of an act of intelligence, to make up for that sincere cordial warmth he felt lacking. So he improvised, exaggerated, let himself go, so as to distract and forget himself. He appeared inconstant, fatuous, and--yes--even ridiculous sometimes.
> [pp. 158,159]

The sense of isolation and frustration with personal definitions is thus evident even in common social intercourse, and so feelings of alienation manifest themselves in masks. Yet man gives himself an identity when he assumes a mask; that is to say, a man is still himself, no matter how many masks he adopts, since change is characteristic of life. The mask will always keep up with the man; isolation will never be overcome. In making an indirect accusation to Donna Matilda, Henry IV asks, "Has it never happened to you, my Lady, to find a different self in yourself? Have you always been the same?" (p. 169), and, indeed, the end of the play affirms that if man can be ever the same, this sameness is defined by the multitude of selves within the individual self, as well as by the personal levels of reality which each man chooses to follow. Adoption of the mask is instinctual, as Henry himself recognises, for otherwise isolation would be less of a factor in men's lives. "Nobody cares to recognize that obscure and fatal power which sets limits to our will" (p. 169), Henry says to Donna Matilda. Yet a short time later, he reflects, "none of us can estimate what we do when we do it from instinct" (p. 171), and we see that his mask and his illusion represent the imposition of necessities. In a way, they are the external pressures because they create the role which a larger reality will freeze. As a result, we find that instinct and fixation are nearly one and the same in this play, as Pirandello's beginning and conclusion reflect.

It would nevertheless be imprecise to say that Pirandello means that man ultimately defeats himself in these plays, for Pirandello makes a distinction between the external "form" and the internal "content," even as he shows the relationship and ultimate identity between them. Thus we might say that Pirandello is pessimistic about man's ability to change things in his life, because of fixed form, but his pessimism shows itself more in the description of characters' actions, the responses to their interaction with form, than in the report of their passivity. We find Henry IV's defeat implied more in the ways that he perpetuates the masquerade than in Belcredi's description of him at the party, for example. Henry feels isolated, and yet he exploits the cause of his isolation to compensate for the pain of it; that is to say, he plays upon the idea that there are multiple levels of reality and multitudes of men leading passive lives as they are oppressed by the realities which do not acknowledge their own: He tells his counsellors, "Everyone has his own way of thinking ...But those others take advantage of this and make you accept their way of thinking; or at least, they suppose they do; because, after all, what do they succeed in imposing on you? Words, words which everyone can interpret in his own manner!" (p. 190). Thus by deceiving his attendants and old friends, Henry imposes the same restraints on them that were imposed on him, and, more importantly, he imposes those restraints which will be imposed on him. "Words" may be interpreted by each man in his own manner, but each man's definition of "words" may be solidified as he tries to extend the implications of this interpretation.

Henry may condemn those who follow along in his masquerade; his friends and supporters are, after all, willingly deceived. Pirandello does raise the question of whether or not man is happier when he can maintain the illusion of his life, for Henry seems to have been happier when his madness was real, and his friends are more comfortable in the knowledge that his madness is genuine. Yet madness, illusion, and identity all alter their terms as one man's view of reality clashes with another, and no illusion can remain intact, except that which deceives all men, namely life itself. The characters' expectations are defeated by a misapprehension of the major illusion, by life, for in many ways they follow the endless changes in identities which life demands without associating any of these changes with that

something which undeniably defines themselves. Furthermore, they misunderstand their own isolation and attempt to reach beyond themselves toward others, with love, as in Henry's case; the subsequent confusion arises from this misunderstanding of personal desire and the reality relative to another. We have again the metaphor of the mirror which reflects man's opinion and freezes him, which shows the content but solidifies the form.

This lack of association by the characters between form and content is exploited by Pirandello in the madness theme, for it is madness that calls the whole nature of deception into question. It is ultimately madness that defeats Henry's attempts to free himself from the complications of a changing life by hiding behind his mask, for mask makes its progress through illusion and identity to truth, though not that truth which man wishes to acknowledge. Henry upbraids his friends and anticipates the destruction of both their expectations of him and their expectations of themselves:

> Do you know what it means to find yourselves face to face with a madman--with one who shakes the foundations of all you have built up in yourselves, your logic, the logic of all your constructions? Madman, lucky folk! construct without logic.... You say, "This cannot be"; but for them everything can be. You say: "This isn't true!" And why? Because it isn't true to you, or you, or you....I know that when I was a child, I thought the moon in the pond was real. How many things I thought real! I believed everything I was told--and I was happy! Because it's a terrible thing if you don't hold on to that which seem true to you today--to that which will seem true to you tomorrow, even if it is the opposite of that which seemed true to you yesterday. I would never wish you to think, as I have done, on this horrible thing which really drives one mad: that if you were beside another and looking into his eyes--as I one day looked into someone's eyes--you might as well be a beggar before a door never to be opened to you; for he who does enter there will never be you, but someone unknown to you with his own different and impenetrable world...
>
> [pp. 192-193]

In Henry's discussion of the moon in the lake, we see another recurrence of the mirror theme, and in the elaboration of an ultimate and unalterable truth, we see the desire for control, which only the loathed form can give. It is that very form, that very fixed identity, which preserves man's isolation and guarantees his madness. Madness really is the manifestation of horror in a mask; it is the realization that the mask is eternal and that the fabulous masquerade is real. Since Henry cultivates his madness, his horror at the outcome of his role in this masquerade is

especially ironic, for the mask not only leads him on to a defeat of personal initiative, but to a destruction of life itself, in the murder of Belcredi. In taking personal and historical revenge, Henry determines the consequences of his mask once and for all.

As stated above, though, the temptation to assume masks is irresistible and instinctual, despite their destructive tendencies. In Henry IV, Donna Matilda's daughter Frida impulsively takes up her mother's old masquerade costume and thereby helps to perpetuate and solidfy the infinite masquerade, both in a personal and historical context. She also puts herself more in the power of Henry's mask and control. "Why did you put it on so soon?" her mother asks her, and Frida replies, "The moment I saw it, the temptation was irresistible..." (p. 180). Perhaps because of the isolation that they feel, characters long to fix others in a permanently defined relationship to themselves. Perhaps their belief that they lack an adequate identity makes them eager to assume parts of roles that others have played before them. In all events, they strive to modify the circumstances of the reality in which they live, and when such alteration cannot be achieved in personal relationships--because the individual's isolation cannot be overcome--alteration is attempted in another medium: that of art. Pirandello enjoys playing with the various forms of art, because their characteristics are fixed, although their content is variable. In this respect, art forms are much like the forms of men, or characters, or masks.

Role-playing is essential in the examination of instinct and temptation, whether it be in Frida's part in the masquerade, or in the characters' attempts to combine various levels of experience and reality in Six Characters in Search of an Author. In the latter play, we see how characters, much in the manner of Frida and others in Henry IV, wish to define all other characters according to their own interpretations of their roles. Of course, interpretation does not necessarily have any bearing on the truth, as the characters discover when they attempt to use interpretation to free themselves from a form which is fixed. Pirandello does not simply emphasize the implications of past actions here, and he goes beyond the complications of living beneath a mask which becomes permanent as others come to assume its reality. The characters in this play are inhibited by their necessary function as characters, for, unlike men, they cannot die, nor can they ever realize change. The various levels of reality, personal

As noted above though, interpretation of common sense is treacherous and fascinating.

interpretations, and experience are emphasized here in another level of existence: "One is born to life in many forms, in many shapes....So one may also be born a character in a play," the Father tells the Manager (SC: p. 217). In other words, the characters are the content of the form which defines them; they are the drama itself, and the drama is within them, eager to be played out. Instinct and impulse are, for them, part of this drama which will ultimately exclude their own identity from their characters; restraint is imposed on them from their birth, as it were. And in this sense, playing out their roles is as futile as trying to alter them, since change has little place in their unwritten play. As part of an author-less play, they are left with the horror of not a wrong definition but an ambiguous one. In anguish, the Father tells the Manager,

> Our reality doesn't change: it can't change! It can't be other than what it is, because it is already fixed forever. It's terrible. Ours is an immutable reality which should make you shudder when you approach us if you are really conscious of the fact that your reality is a mere transitory and fleeting illusion, taking this form today and that tomorrow, according to the conditions, according to your own will, your sentiments, which in turn are controlled by an intellect that shows them to you today in one manner and tomorrow. . .who knows how?. . . Illusions of reality represented in this fatuous comedy of life that never ends, nor can ever end! Because if tomorrow it were to end. . .then why, all would be finished.
>
> [p. 266]

The defeat of instinct here is thus greater than that in Henry IV, for here we see that Pirandello is denying the characters an instinct which they thought they possessed, but which they are not able to distinguish from the dramatic sketch of their past actions. They may tell the Manager that they are "alive" (p. 285), but their existence is continually being questioned by the lack of an author for their actions. Try as they might, they cannot be authors for themselves, for not only does character differ from character, but a single character's self at one time differs from that at another time, much as Henry IV's masked madness is distinct from his masked sanity. If there is any sort of human instinct to be found in these characters, then, it is in the diversity of roles which each character could, presumably, play. The drama is indeed in the characters themselves, in the "diverse consciences" that the Father speaks of to the Step-Daughter:

> We have this illusion of being one person for all, of having a personality that is unique in all our acts. But it isn't true. We perceive this when, tragically, perhaps, in something we do, we are as it were, suspended, caught up in the air on a kind of hook. Then we perceive that all of us was not in that act, and that it would be an atrocious injustice to judge us by that action alone, as if all our existence were summed up in that one deed.
>
> [p. 232]

It is interesting to see how the Father appeals to the instinctual reaction of man to assume one mask at one time, and another mask at another time, for his "diverse consciences," which the drama cannot embody with ease, affect the quality of the lives of the other characters. The other characters suffer for an action which may not be typical of the Father but which is definite to the drama, and because it is definite to the drama of their lives, it brings about their destruction. In going to Madame Page's brothel, therefore, the Father generates the form under which all the characters live; his action demands the reaction with which the characters' play is concerned. Thus the Father may be discouraged by what he sees as the disparity between form and content, but his fellow characters suffer because they see both form and identity as frozen, immutable. They are also frozen in the isolation and ignorance of other's opinions and pain. As a result, they play the parts designated to them by the Father's actions and later assigned to them by his interpretations, and though they may refute the latter, they cannot alter the implications of the former, as the Step-Daughter continually points out. Even the Son, while despising the Father for ruining the life of his mother and feeling shame for the Father's original deed and fabrications, cannot deny the influence of a past deed; his anger is directed against the interpretations that the Father uses to construct the play with the Manager: "He thinks he has got at the meaning of it all. Just as if each one of us in every circumstance of life couldn't find his own explanation of it!" (p. 289). In other words, the irony of their situation, as characters fixed in a play with no author, is intensified by the elaboration of the Father's exploits, because eventually his past actions and his present interpretations, or designations of roles, become one and the same. Thus the influence of the interior form, imposed by the Father, and the exterior form, imposed by the demands of their

play, and, indeed, Pirandello's play as a whole, destroy the sense of identity of the characters by limiting their actions and their relationship to one another. They are as much defeated by real actions as by representations and interpretations of them, and so here, as in Henry IV, we find that what is most fantastic becomes most real.

Even more than Henry IV, Six Characters in Search of an Author shows how the subversion of a mask destroys not only the individual who tries to gain control of his mask but also destroys others as well. We watch Henry IV kill Belcredi and become part of a fixed form in an endless masquerade, but in the later play we watch the six characters repeat their actions, retell their speeches, rediscover the pains of their losses in an unwritten play which lacks even the predictability of the set historical facts of Henry IV's pageant. In Six Characters in Search of an Author, as we have seen, the past is itself masked by interpretations and instinctual role-playing. And role-playing is masked by form, and the form is itself masked by the nature of the drama. So, reaching back to earlier comments made on isolation, we find that form isolates individuals just as it isolates the masks which they put on themselves and on others. In the end, then, Pirandello seems to affirm only misunderstanding, not truth, and this misunderstanding is a product of the instinctual adoption of masks. Curiously enough, when the masks are reinterpreted by the actors in the production of the characters' lives, instinct becomes subordinated to interpretation, for the masks themselves are reflected in the medium of art and reveal the form of the art without concern for its content. This inversion of the mask, then, brings on the destruction of the individual identity, just as Henry IV's perpetuation of his mask brings on the destruction of his individual initiative, and, ultimately, the destruction of his identity. By making the masquerade predominant in Henry IV, Pirandello subordinates the potential for man to exercise his initiative, and so we find that even impulse is reflected in a mask of its own. Before the six characters make their appearance, for example, the Manager tells his actors that he wants to see them make manifest the dialogue of his next expected production: "The empty form of reason without the fullness of instinct, which is blind" (p. 218). When the actors attempt to follow the play as the characters have lived it, they cannot capture the sense of identity that each character has for himself, for the masks obliterate the fine

distinctions for which the characters are struggling. Upon seeing the Leading Man act his part, the Father says, "Already, I begin to hear my words ring false, as if they had another sound" (p. 248). Later, he attempts to explain his discomfort to the Manager, attempts to show why he feels that the play must be acted and why it remains still a part of him:

> The Father: . . . I admire your actors--this gentleman here, this lady; but they are certainly not us!
> The Manager: I should hope not. Evidently they cannot be you, if they are actors.
> The Father: Just so: actors! Both of them act our parts exceedingly well. But, believe me, it produces quite a different effect on us. They want to be us, but they aren't, all the same.
> The Manager: What is it then anyway?
> The Father: Something that is. . . that is theirs--and no longer ours. . .
>
> [pp. 256,257]

The Father's distress that his life and his interpretations have been modified and, indeed, stolen by the actors indicates the degree of pain inherent in the isolation of Pirandello's characters, for isolation is itself an indication that there cannot be a multitude of interpretations, that a single interpretation--one's own--cannot be viable for long. Each man's interpretation of reality will be defeated and destroyed along with his expectations, for singular definitions of such abstract terms such as truth, reality, and identity find themselves formulated into a greater, more abstract idea, called form, or an artistic idea, called the mask, which will itself be subverted and redefined. The mask and the reality will ultimately be as inalterable as isolation itself.

The sense of entrapment obvious in Pirandello's work may derive much from his concern for and use of the art form in the interior design of his drama, since both the interior play and the masquerade reflect a part of the nature of the exterior drama. They may call the usual audience-stage relationship into question, and, as a result, the audience's expectations are also being examined along with those of the characters. In this way, Pirandello manages to make a statement about the degree of isolation that he sees in modern life. It is of course ironic, not to say satirical, that, just as the characters face the alteration of their relationships to their roles and to each other, the audience also faces a change in its relationship to the drama. Thus when

the Father talks about the nature of illusion to the Manager, his comments have relevance beyond that to his own situation; he speaks of the destruction of faith: "Vainglorously, we try to substitute ourselves for this faith, creating thus for the rest of the world a reality which we believe after their fashion, while, actually, it doesn't exist. For each one of us has his own reality to be respected before God, even when it is harmful to one's very self" (p. 235). The destruction of faith may therefore have its cause in exterior events or personal attitudes, but the assumption of the individual's belief is a necessary result of this loss of faith; illusion itself is not immediately condemned by Pirandello or by other playwrights, since these playwrights do not directly challenge the causes for the destruction of faith. Nevertheless, they all assume that illusion is potentially destructive, for its necessity belies the isolation which it produces.

In Pirandello, this destruction is pervasive and unalterable, but in the work of other playwrights, illusion is not always directed against the self, or, in the Father's terminology, illusion is not always a substitution of the self for the loss of faith. For this reason, the sense of isolation may be less, since others may be substituted for one's own despair at any lack of achievement. Understanding of others may not exist, but there are at least some tenuous relationships among characters which can survive the conflicts between various sets of expectations. Pirandello may stress the human need for definition more than the need for companionship, yet in his description of characters anxious to have the integrity of their identities preserved, he assumes that such definition and affirmation are sought from the characters' peers. His characters seek to overcome alienation by projecting themselves in masks, but it would be equally possible for characters to try to overcome partial or complete suppression of themselves by working to re-define their relationships to others. A dramatist like Williams manages to incorporate both ways of depicting characters' struggles, though he uses the latter approach to frame his analysis of characters working through alienation in a way similar to that of Pirandello's characters.

Like Pirandello, Williams uses dramatic form to show how illusion is reflected in reality, or, in the case of The Glass Menagerie, reality in retrospect. Pirandello creates an art that freezes the transience of life; Williams, in this play at least, uses memory, which is fixed in

relation to time. Williams incorporates both approaches in this play, since he shows how all forms of delusion and escape have real causes, though they do not necessarily have similar consequences; some forms of illusion are more destructive than others. Williams implies, in his description of his three central characters, that the development of their delusions and the cultivation of their several forms of escape are not unaccountable, for frustration or bitterness affects delusion. Amanda's deception especially is willfully adopted, a mask which she struggles to preserve against others' changing attitudes. Perhaps the best terms to use in an analysis of the defeat and alteration of these characters' expectations can be found in a statement by the up-and coming man, Jim, who observes to Laura, "Being disappointed is one thing and being discouraged is something else" (TGM: p. 218).[2] Disappointment is universal; discouragement, which implies an overpowering defeat, is not always assumed to be universal, although Pirandello and O'Neill depict it as widespread. Williams, however, shows that the difference between these two responses to failure and defeat is dependent upon the apprehension of a person's isolation from others. Denial of one's most basic desires and instincts is itself a form of delusion, as is the willful denial of present circumstance.

In The Glass Menagerie, instinct is as important a consideration to the development of a character as it is in Pirandello, for it is that instinct for self-preservation and self-justification which compels the characters to act as they do. Instinct sets the framework for the play, although in curious fashion: the same instinct which drives Amanda to fabricate illusions about herself and her children drives Tom to escape from the falsity of the life that entraps him. His escape, realized in the narrative role that he assumes in the introduction and conclusion of the play, distinguishes his frustration from Amanda's delusion. Both characters feel oppressed by the order of their lives, yet they rebel against such order in different ways; Tom feels that his talents are lost in the factory where he must work to sustain the family, and Amanda feels that her life can be justified by the actions and achievements of her children. "What is there left but dependency all our lives?" Amanda asks Laura when she realizes that her daughter is failing to meet his expectations (p. 156). Yet even though dependency may be instinctual, the form of dependency that a character chooses to take is less distinct, as is shown

by a dispute between Amanda and Tom:

> Tom: Man is by instinct a lover, a hunter, a fighter, and none of those instincts are given much play in the warehouse!
> Amanda: Man is by instinct! Don't quote instinct to me! Instinct is something that people have got away from! It belongs to animals! Christian adults don't want it!
>
> [p. 174]

It should be noted that Tom's speech is as idealistic as that of his mother, for his definitions of instinct are derived from the life that he sees projected onto a movie screen, where action is observed by the audience but never realized in actual life. The lovers, the hunters, and the fighters simply do not exist in the form that he imagines. Thus the irony in these two speeches is derived from the restraint and immobility which son and mother assume in making such arguments. Staunch morality is immutable, and similarly, in the movie house, one finds that "People go to the *movies* instead of *moving*!" (p. 201). The juxtaposition of these two views--one of which reflects of a strong desire to be dutiful to the self, while the other indicates a strong desire for others to be dutiful to one--shows how instinct, of whatever type, breaks down the form and order of life. Try as he might, man can never transcend instinct, and it is for this reason that Tom is able to break away from the constraints of life with his family, and it is for this reason that Amanda cannot redefine her dependency on others.

Tom's frustration with the life he must lead to support his family and perpetuate his mother's idealistic beliefs may culminate in his escape from the form which oppresses him, but such escape is not without a price. The shattering of illusion is potentially dangerous, for one's self and for others, as we have seen in modern drama from Ibsen onward. However, Williams, like Pirandello, denounces neither the illusion itself nor its destruction, although he does describe the actions and reactions which culminate in the conflict between character and form. For example, Tom, irritated by his mother's insistence on the value of his job at the warehouse, hurls his coat to the ground and inadvertently breaks part of Laura's glass menagerie (p. 164), and we see by this symbolic action that destruction in this play involves self-destruction, as well as the destruction of others. Such a form of destruction is a necessary product of a play in

which Williams emphasizes individual and mutual dependency. Amanda's own actions, like those of her son, challenge the expectations of others, except Amanda's frustration with present circumstance does not lead her to devise a physical escape from it. She reaches back to a past where her role was glorified, whereas Tom reaches ahead--and the significance of the action as memory in the play confirms the achievement, though perhaps not the glory of his escape--to a future in which he will be one of the lovers, hunters, or fighters whom he thinks live life according to their instinct.

In his description of her character in the dramatis personæ, Williams speaks of Amanda as "A little woman of great but confused vitality clinging frantically to another time and place" (p. 129). That "other time and place" is of course her youth, before her marriage to the "telephone man who--who fell in love with long distance" (p. 204). We get the sense that she is a woman who fears being isolated from other people, just as she fears being isolated, by present circumstance, from the successes of her past. Perhaps the sense of loss generated by the irrevocable happiness of her past and the uncertainty of her marriage compels her to cling, unnecessarily, to her children. It seems as if her possessiveness drives her children away because it denies them the space to perpetuate, if not to realize, their expectations. Once again, defeat breeds idealism, but Williams adds a twist to the analysis of such defeats, for we should realize that we are asked to examine a memory play in which a woman, by failing to loosen her hold on her own memories and by undermining others' hopes, perpetuates the control of memory over life. It is significant that we see an effective escape of a sort in Tom's abandonment of his family, but even in his free life, memory takes hold. Amanda's idealistic view of the past discourages such happy outlooks for her children, and so Williams juxtaposes her euphoric remembrances with the frustrations and pain of Tom, and most importantly, of Laura. Amanda recalls the pride she took in her multitude of gentleman callers shortly before she realizes that Laura has failed her to attend typing course; she then decides that Laura can only hope to be properly married and begins to plan for this event. Later on, Amanda recalls the pleasures of her youth again as she prepares to tell Laura that Jim O'Conner is coming for dinner:

> Picnics--lovely! So lovely, that country in May--all lacy with dogwood, literally flooded with jonquils! That was the spring I had the craze for jonquils. Jonquils became an absolute obsession....It was a joke, Amanda and her jonquils. Finally there were no more vases to hold them, every available space was filled with jonquils. No vases to hold them? All right, I'll hold them myself!
>
> [p. 194]

The sheer indulgence expressed in this memory complements Amanda's possessiveness; similarly, the restraints which time put on Amanda's life resemble those which Amanda puts on the lives of her children. For these reasons, it is difficult to separate the mother's defeated expectations from those of the daughter, since the first results in the other, and both complement each other. Laura, for example, is apprehensive about leaving her little world, where both her defect and the glass menagerie are relatively safe. And Amanda's dreams and memories seem to be justified by the goals she sets for others, so she sees no disparity in having no active goals for herself. In the way in which each of the women restricts her life, Williams shows that mother and daughter are very much alike, and yet Amanda's destructiveness is revealed in her disregard for the restrictions that Laura has put on her own life: "all she does is fool with those pieces of glass and play those worn-out records. What kind of life is that for a girl to lead?" (p. 175). The mother imposes her views on the daughter, as when she tells Laura to make a wish the evening before Jim's visit; Laura asks her mother what she should wish for--as if she does not know or does not care--and Amanda, thinking of her own life, declares "Happiness! Good fortune!" (p. 189). She wants to believe in the validity of her past life, and she wants to believe that her daughter's life will be a happy and prosperous one. However, Laura's illusions are shattered by her mother's meddling: the man from her school days is already engaged, and her unicorn's horn is symbolically shattered during her brief, but important scene with Jim. Here, just as in memory, we see how an encounter which seems slight to other characters can become important to an individual character's life, for Laura, like her mother, seeks to attach herself to a man who cannot be tied down. Perhaps Tom, like these other men, will not be tied down, although he feels a sense of responsibility to those around him, to his sister who is defenseless. When Amanda upbraids him for neglecting to tell

her that Jim was married, he tells her that his job requires work from him, not knowledge. "You don't know things anywhere!" she tells him. "You live in a dream; you manufacture illusions!" (p. 265). Yet all the characters in this play manufacture illusions, not so much for others as for themselves, so we must come to question the quality of such illusions, as well as the degree of indulgence and destructiveness which they involve.

As in Pirandello's plays, illusion can be a means of self-protection, an affirmation of isolation instead of an avoidance of it. Amanda and Tom's most destructive form of indulgence involves destroying Laura's protective isolation, yet such destruction may be a result of their desires to live their own lives unencumbered. Whatever the cause of their actions, the memory of Laura's vulnerability affects them as they go on to live their lives. Amanda presumably must continue to protect her daughter, and Tom, in his separation from his family, is haunted by the memory of his sister, by the image of glass illuminated by light. In one sense, the complexity of his life is set against the simplicity and vulnerablility of her life, and the gentleness of her method of survival--turning inwards away from the common form of life--calls his own approach to life--turning outwards in an attempt to project himself onto the world around him--into question. Thus we have a man whose independance in life, though not in memory, frames the play, and it is this need that the individual has for survival, as well as the complexities deriving from this need and its relation to other people, that concerns Williams in other plays, most notably in A Streetcar Named Desire. Characters are isolated, yet long for some concern and affirmation of their roles by other characters. They survive by believing that they have a duty to themselves and that others have a responsibility to them. But just as Pirandello's characters learn that their interpretations of life will be challenged by those of other characters, so Williams' characters, like Tom or Stella, come to recognize that the only sort of duty in which they can believe is that to themselves, and even this sense of isolation can be destroyed by the influence of others' actions. In Streetcar, Blanche tells Stella that she had to suffer all the burden of their parents' deaths and the loss of the estate, only to be told by Stella, "The best I could do was make my own living" (SND: p. 25). This is all that any character can do, for survival in these plays demands struggle, suffering, and compassion of a definite sort.

As in The Glass Menagerie, we encounter a character held back by her past, though this time the events in the character's memory are troubling ones, for her present actions are an attempt to deny her past ones. She assumes a mask which, in the end, will clarify her real nature and not disguise it, and, as a result, her whole means for survival is destroyed. Blanche is a compelling character, not simply because she is self-destructive, but because her desires and needs are not easily condemned, although her methods of dealing with these desires are reproachable. She is much distressed by her increasing age and loss of beauty, for she is very particular of her appearance, but we see that her fear of losing her beauty is a fear of losing control of her life. In watching the deaths of her family and in realizing the misapplication of her love, she has seen that life is not always kind to people. In this sense, her desperation is not without cause; Blanche first appears in the play in a frantic state, and we sense that her fall will be inevitable and gruesome, which indeed it is. Her attention to appearance and decorum is misplaced not simply because of the company that Stanley keeps, but also because such concern belies her real nature, which desires to be aggressive rather than submissive. "I never was hard or self-sufficient enough," she tells Stella.

> When people are soft--soft people have got to shimmer and glow--they've got to put on soft colours, the colours of butterfly wings, and put a--paper lantern over the light. . . .It isn't enough to be soft. You've got to be soft *and attractive*. And I--I'm fading now! I don't know how much longer I can turn the trick.
>
> [p. 79]

One has difficulty using charm when one is so dependent upon shades over the light, on soft things; the strength of Blanche's desire to survive is strong enough to save her, except desire is defined by its opposite, and this opposite, as she points out several times in the course of the play, is death.

As the play proceeds, we learn that it is death which produces desire, it is death which destroys desire, and it is death which, at all times, defeats man's desires to survive. The conflict is not incidental, but irreversible, pervasive, and continual. Blanche was driven to selling her body because of death, and she seeks help from Stella and Stanley because she cannot escape

from the influence of such desire on death. It is as if the very definition of desire has been altered for her, because she can no longer realize her own desires and only confuses those of others. In this sense, "death" in this play represents the isolation of the individual, the inability of one person to know the circumstances of another's life and have control over those circumstances. And, as in The Glass Menagerie, such inability to control another's circumstances perpetuates one's inability to control one's own circumstances. Here, Williams shows that desire in itself becomes the means by which change is defeated, for desire is an affirmation of one's acceptance of present circumstance, though Blanche is not aware of this: we desire because we believe that what we need should be readily available. Blanche, thinking that her sister is married to a madman, attempts to persuade Stella to rid herself of Stanley and imposes her own sense of reality onto that of her sister. It is evident from Stella's comments and behaviour that she does not want to leave her husband, that she is not deluded as Blanche thinks she is:

> Stella: ...there are things that happen between a man and a woman in the dark --that sort of make everything else seem --unimportant. [*pause*]
> Blanche: What you are talking about is brutal desire--just--Desire! --the name of that rattle-trap street-car that bangs through the Quarter, up one old narrow street and down another...
> Stella: Haven't you ever ridden on that street-car?
> Blanche: It brought me here.-- Where I'm not wanted and where I'm ashamed to be...
>
> [p. 70]

Certainly, Blanche does not wish to recognize the desire which brought her to Stella and Stanley's house, for she wishes to escape from the shame, frustration, and despair of her past, but desire, perpetuated by present circumstance, will not be ignored. There is a confused blending of what Blanche wishes to believe and what the truth of her situation is, for although she vows that she tells the truth, she cannot bear reality, as she cannot bear direct light on her ageing features. As Stanley tells Stella the truth of Blanche's past, Blanche is soaking luxuriously in the bath and singing snatches of songs to herself: "Say, it's only a paper moon, Sailing over a cardboard sea--But it wouldn't be make-believe if you believed in me!" (p. 99). Her

dependence on strangers is thus an attempt to secure some approval of her abandonment of the past, but she cannot hope for such acknowledgement. Stanley, for one, will not tolerate her airs and makes a game out of tearing apart Blanche's illusions. Desire thus isolates Blanche from other people and from other paths in life, but desire itself is not an isolated emotion. It is directed outward from the self: "If you'd done this, it wouldn't've cost me that," she sings later on (p. 119). On the surface, then, we see that one's life and actions are not isolated, yet we can credit a great deal of action to delusion, instigated by desire, which is itself a product of self-absorption. These contradictory impulses--between self-absorption on the one hand and reaction to outside stimuli on the other hand--make Blanche vulnerable to the aggression of Stanley, for he sees her presence in his household as an imposition; she destroys the accepted pattern of his life and challenges his own desires, which are stronger than hers if only because she avoids recognizing hers. He is her mirror, reflecting the truth of her identity and her desire, much as the characters in Pirandello's plays reflect others' illusions. Her mask cannot be perpetuated when she is challenged by others's perceptions of reality; we should remember the Son's comments to the Manager in Six Characters in Search for an Author: "it isn't possible to live in front of a mirror which not only freezes us with that image of ourselves, but throws our likeness back at us with a horrible grimace" (SC: p. 274). Williams's destruction of Blanche is perhaps exceedingly violent and demeaning, but it seems as if Williams means to argue that Blanche's rape by Stanley and her subsequent admittance into a mental institution is self-imposed insofar as it is the reflection of her own desire, which imposes itself on her life because she attempts to deny it.

When Blanche is taken away, Stella is advised by a friend that "life has to go on. No matter what happens, you've got to keep on going" (p. 138), and such advice is a repetition of her assertion to her sister in the first scene that each man must try to live, for himself and for those who are the objects of his desire, as best he can. Dependency may seem necessary but is potentially destructive. Stella's hold on the future and struggle for the continuation of her present circumstances seems to be the most laudible reaction to conflicts in life in Williams's ideology, yet for those characters who cannot abandon their pasts--and there are a great many

of them in Williams's plays--we see that part of falling short of one's expectations is making a conscious effort to forget the past. Yet Williams also recognizes that there is the danger of being too much on one's guard. In the plays analyzed above, we do not see a resolution of the problem of dealing adequately with one's past; how does one remember--as Blanche does in spite of herself, as Amanda does, as Pirandello's characters do--and still go on, as Stella tries to do?

O'Neill tries to come to some sort of resolution in Long Day's Journey into Night, but, as in The Glass Menagerie, we can only look for a resolution in the exterior form of the play, for we will not find it in the interior conflicts, which are a product of memory, though not in as definite a way as in Williams's play. We should recognize, but need not give too much emphasis to the inclusion of the character who remembers, O'Neill's own self, in the play. Survival here is thus complicated by the blending of form with memory and, concentrating wholly on the text of the play itself, by the forced imposition of the past in Mary's addiction and Edmund's consumption. Both these diseases are a result of past actions and inefficiencies which recur and reappear to haunt characters already defeated by their personal illusions and inabilities to comprehend the nature of the reality under which they must live. The increased emphasis on dependancy, hinted at in Williams, is, in O'Neill's work, reminiscent of Ibsen in Ghosts and The Wild Duck. Again, as in Streetcar, we see that although the individual is responsible for the circumstances of his life, these circumstances quickly get beyond his control because of his misplaced concern and reliance on others. Tyrone tells Mary to forget the past and get on with life, but she replies camly, "Why? How can I? The past is the present, isn't it? It's the future too. We all try to lie out of that but life won't let us" (LDJ: p. 87).[8] It is as if life continues, but deception and self-absorption remain constant.

As in Pirandello, we are confronted with characters who neglect to recognize the control that they might have exercised over their lives, characters who lament their present lack of control but lack the incentive to attempt to alleviate their discouragement. It is perhaps easiest to begin an analysis of this play with an examination of Mary's character, since her retreat into the past, that very imposition of time from which the characters are struggling to escape, affects both the attitudes and expectations of her husband and sons. The effect of the

medication on her, with their dulling of her reactions to life, is itself a assumption of a mask, for Mary's addiction to them is partly the result of instinct and partly the result of a cultivated avoidance of the present and its disturbances. She does not want to recognize the likelihood of Edmund's illness; as her own illness had been hidden from him before, so now his illness is hidden from her, though she fears the worst. She deludes herself and hides behind her mask of helplessness, which grows increasingly more real as the night continues:

> None of us can help the things life has done to us. They're done before you realize it, and once they're done they make you do other things until at last everything comes between you and what you'd like to be, and you've lost your true self forever.
>
> [p. 61]

Her family feels guilt for her condition, for they sense that they might have helped to stop the things which life has done to her. It was Tyrone's miserliness which compelled him to send his wife to a quack doctor; it was Edmund's birth which generated Mary's illness. Of course, the blame for her condition could rest with Mary, for she need not have married Tyrone, and she need not have abandoned her ideals. As the medication gain more and more control over her, she begins to search for something that she believes she has lost: "Something I miss terribly. It can't be altogether lost" (p. 178). Such a statement is reminiscent of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's comment that "There must have been a moment, at the beginning, when we could have said--No" (R &G, p. 91), but for Mary and her family, supposition is destructive, for it forces them to solidify their attachments to the past. Mary attempts to discount the effect of all past actions on her present state and tries to alleviate others' concern for her by appealing to their love and by underscoring the purposelessness of their concern. Ultimately, she manages to absorb herself in a dream world which the circumstances of the present cannot touch; her condition is like that of the fog which begins to invade the night in the beginning of the third act: "It hides you from the world and the world from you. You feel that everything has changed, and nothing is what it seemed to be. No one can find or touch you anymore" (p. 98). Thus it is no surprise that, at the conclusion of the play, she has managed to retreat, through her dream

world, back to that time in the past when she might have made a choice which would have altered the course of her life, when all of her expectations might have been fulfilled, when the thought of a life with Tyrone had not been born. She rediscovers the hope of never losing faith, and this completion of the mask generated by the defeat of her expectations and by the impossibility of substantial change in her life undermines the analyses which Tyrone and his sons are making about their own lives. Her mask becomes as irrevocable as Henry IV's, though she never comprehends the horror of its fixation. That burden is born by her sons and husband.

The tension among the male members of the family reflects the tension generated by Mary's decision to resume taking her medication, a decision initiated by apprehension about her younger son's health. The conflicts among the men are old ones; the act of giving and taking is upset by individuals' defiance over control or lack of control in their own lives. In a sense, the hostility that they feel is a mask, for it conceals their concern for each other while it reveals their frustration. They hurt each other because they do not want to face the truth or because they wish to impose the truth on others who do not want to face it. The most intense confrontations of their individual expectations, their concerns, and their personal delusions occur in the final scene of the play, when the demise of Mary's self is apparent; she moves about upstairs as Edmund, Jamie, and Tyrone attempt to escape from reality into a drunken stupor. As they resume their conversation, Edmund speaks of his escape in the fog outside in terms similar to those of Mary:

> Nothing was what it is. That's what I wanted--to be alone with myself in another world where truth is untrue and life can hide from itself....Who wants to see life as it is, if they can help it? It's three Gorgons in one. You look in their faces and turn to stone. Or it's Pan. You see him and you die--that is, inside you--and you have to go on living as a ghost.
>
> [p. 181]

They are all trying to hide life from itself, for all their dreams are debased, and they are lost among the remnants of their past. Isolation gives them the greatest pain, for, in feeling lost from Mary, they realize that they feel lost from themselves as well. The masks that they adopt

in order to deal with the horror of Mary and Edmund's diseases, and with the destruction of all their expectations and ideals, is a reflection of that mask which Mary assumes for all of them. "You know, something in her does it deliberately--to get beyond our reach, to be rid of us, to forget we're alive!" laments Edmund. "It's as if, in spite of loving us, she hated us!" (p. 139). Their helplessness finds expression in their own attempts, through drunkenness, to get beyond reach of her, each other, and themselves. Try as they might, they can never escape the causes of their frustration and despair. Tyrone, for example, reflects upon the defeat of his expectations when he feared the advent of good fortune, because it could be taken away so quickly, yet he held on to an easy means for survival and profit because he feared extending himself. As a result, he must live with the fact that he never became the actor that he wanted to become. No matter what our condition may be, we fear that which we do not have and come to lament not having what we most desire.

In this sense, then, O'Neill seems to put more emphasis on individual faults and mishandling of situations than on the influence of forces beyond the individual's control, perhaps because the influence of such forces is assumed in his description of the family's conditions. Edmund observes that life is "so damned crazy," only to be upbraided by his father quoting snatches of Shakespeare in which the tragic defeat of man is credited to man's insufficiencies, not to those of exterior forces (pp. 151,152). Yet all this while, Mary moves about upstairs, a victim, so there is the sense that there are forces which are stronger than man, a sense that man is not defeated in isolation. What happens to Mary affects Tyrone and Edmund and Jamie equally. Although everything seems to be out of their grasp, they continue to hold on to each other, not realizing that, by continuing to maintain their hold on each other, they deny themselves the transcendence for which they long. One man's mask perpetuates another's, perpetuates the isolation which they all fear and do not know that they cultivate by fearing it. As each character reveals the ways in which he has fallen short of his own expectations and the ways in which others have fallen short of his expectations, we find that masks are pulled off and put on again; Jamie tells his brother that he encouraged Edmund's hopes yet was profoundly jealous of him: "Never wanted you to succeed and make me look worse

by comparison" (p. 165). Similarly, Tyrone confesses that his expectations of Jamie were not fulfilled: "My first-born, who I hoped would bear my name in honour and dignity, who showed such brilliant promise!" (p. 167). In the end, they realise that their expectations of others were generated by a disgust and frustration in themselves; such a realization is coupled with more melancholy and disgust which is itself intensified by the drink. As a result, their helplessness and inability to cope are brought into greater contrast with Mary's withdrawal, for the general mood becomes one of despair and moroseness. Jamie recites some lines of Rossetti after his father has accused him of wasting his talents: '"Look in my face. My name is Might-Have-Been; / I am also called No More, Too Late, Farewell"' (p. 168), and indeed, their circumstances seem too far gone to be changed dramatically for the better. They, like Henry IV, come to see that they are locked into a pattern of life which, because they did nothing to alleviate it after its genesis, has solidified into an infinite masquerade of their own. They see their own isolation, as a family, in the ruin and withdrawel of their mother, and they recognize their own isolation as individuals by their inability to transcend their own private grief to accommodate that of each other. Their masks may be pulled off, but they still must play the roles assigned to them at the beginning of the play.

Thus in O'Neill we recognize the same emphasis on stasis that we saw in Pirandello, the same description of the relative isolation of each character. The existence of relationships is not enough to offer men some release from their suffering, for they are unable to accommodate their interpretation of reality, or suffering, or despair with that of others; they cannot draw themselves out of themselves enough to be free of their identity. This identity is, as we have seen, imposed both by the self and by exterior forces and circumstances. The inherent pessimism of these plays is due to the combination of individual initiative and external influence, for although initiative and instinct reflect control, their effects become permanent insofar as they become fixed, like masks in a masquerade, in definitions which the individual can no longer control. It is as if these characters are revealed only by their past actions, for their present responses do not affect their condition, although they may increase the intensity of their frustration with it. In this sense, the past is itself a mask which is imposed on the

characters, for they cannot escape their previous actions; Mary in Long Day's Journey into Night finds security in going back to a time when she could actuate changes, and Henry IV also attempts to return to such a period of time, although his attempt is defeated by his own longing to overcome isolation. Memory is therefore a form of escape through which a given character can rationalize his condition; it is an escape from the stasis of the present at the same time that it is an analysis of it. Yet memory, as it is revealed in that supposed mask of the past, can serve as a means to deny the effect of choice and control in life. Characters may assume that the definite state of the present is a reflection of fixed conditions which occurred throughout time; the irrevocable nature of the past intensifies this pessimism. Williams himself uses memory to reconsider the past in terms of the present, and so delusion can be the product of imposing present frustration on past uncertainty. One could presumable deny the worth of any desire or will, as O'Neill hints at in Long Day's Journey into Night when Edmund "*grins wryly*" and says, "It was a great mistake, my being born a man, I would have been much more successful as a sea gull or a fish. As it is, I will always be a stranger who never feels at home, who does not really want and is not really wanted, who can never belong, who must always be a little in love with death!" (pp. 158,154). Edmund's sense of displacement is reflected in all the kinds of masks that these characters adopt to protect themselves, for isolation is as much a product of despair as it is the cause of it. The irony of Edmund's statement--and the irony upon which O'Neill drew in the therapeutic writing of this play--is that each character is unaware that he is as much a stranger to others as he is a stranger to himself.

6

Beckett and Pinter

Pirandello, Williams, and O'Neill each describe the lives of characters who isolate themselves from others and from change because they misunderstand the nature of reality. They neither understand the roles they long to play behind their masks and illusions, nor the roles which they must play, as their self-imposed masks become a fixed part of their identity. We saw in the last chapter how memory can serve as a mask of its own, can be as damaging to the character as any ill-founded illusion, but if we recognize that a character's hold on memory reflects his isolation and displacement, his despair and frustration, we see that externalizing such isolation challenges both the whole concept of will and the imposition of external forces. By describing the character's world as a place of waste and desolation, of time which is fixed and immutable--just as the past is fixed and immutable--a playwright may come to describe a situation which is controlled neither by the presence of individual initiative nor by external influence, but by an unquestionable result of the opposition between personal misapprehension and external indifference to the human situation. In such a situation, we would have neither the conflict between instinct and duty, as in Ibsen, nor the conflict between desire and circumstance, as in the indifferent universe described by Brecht, but a wholly separate manifestation of the isolation of man. In such a situation, we would see that man is no longer struggling with conflicts but with misunderstanding and misapprehension in their purest forms; there is no longer any conflict: only the opposition of two irreconcilable forces, the larger of which will overcome the other because of its ignorance of and indifference to it.

In Beckett's Waiting for Godot, Endgame, and Krapp's Last Tape, and in Pinter's The Caretaker and No Man's Land, we see how change is denied to the individual character, both because the character is unable to bring about change and because any change that occurs in the world is all but unrecognizable to him. In this sense, the individual character is not only

isolated from his world, but he has internalized this isolation so that he cannot know himself. If we take up Pirandello's concept of the mask once again, we can see how the mask, which disguises the self but ultimately fixes the self in the form which it takes at a specified time, cannot account for the multitude of selves which make up a character through successive periods of time. Pirandello lets us observe the processes by which the mask is self-imposed and self-perpetuated, but Beckett describes a character after that one identity has been solidified. With no change in the individual, and little recognizable change in the external world, Beckett's plays thus show how the loss of the multiple identities leads to a loss of the self. Not only is initiative defeated, but also the incentive to question one's circumstance is destroyed. The world that he and Pinter describe might be unbearably bleak to us if they were not conscious of the dispartity between hope, of whatever kind, and utter desolation; as an audience, we are shown this disparity too, though we see it in humour. As Nell tells Nagg in Beckett's Endgame, "Nothing is funnier than unhappiness..."; when Nagg is shocked by her admission, Nell goes on to describe her meaning:

> ...it's the most comical thing in the world. And we laugh, we laugh, with a will, in the beginning. But it's always the same thing. Yes, it's like the funny story we have heard too often, we still find it funny, but we don't laugh any more.
> [EG: pp. 18,19] [1]

Comic elements are, for Beckett and Pinter, the most direct and the most sophisticated ways of caricaturing the human situation for the edification of the audience, for purposelessness is best understood through an appeal to humour, not through a direct appeal to the intellect or the emotions. The concept of purposelessness itself reflects the opposition between a character's response and his world's demands, between an audience's expectations and the demands of the drama which they are viewing. Thus we can see that this type of drama is potentially humorous in its intent, since what it demands from character and audience--ridicule and suffering of a sort--and what it gives--humour and a form of occupation--differ from that which generated it: the desire to exploit artistic form to incorporate a change in the way man wishes to portray life's possibilities.

Dealing explicitly with the plays, however, we need to recognize the lack of possibility which the characters see in their lives just as we acknowledge the humour of the characters' despair. Waiting for Godot, for example, opens with Gogo's declaration that there's "nothing to be done"; Gogo is, of course, attempting to remove his boot, but Didi takes this comment in its wider context: "I'm beginning to come round to that opinion. All my life I've tried to put it from me, saying, Vladimir, be reasonable, you haven't yet tried everything" (WforG: 7). The juxtaposition of these two observations reveals how Beckett undervalues the singular effort as well as the culmination of personal efforts; both efforts are equally ridiculous. Both efforts reveal a strain of defeatism which is at least indirectly tied to lack of motivation and lack of initiative. Still, nothing can be done in Gogo and Didi's world: they are waiting, no longer knowing why they wait and no longer able to determine the extent of their waiting. In this sense, we need not discount the effect of exterior forces on men, the effect of waiting on Gogo and Didi, but we should first examine the effect that thwarted expectations have on them, since they sustain their own expectations, even though they may not create them.

Gogo and Didi, waiting for the appearance of Godot, seem caught in an endless cycle of words and confrontations which intensifies their inability to comprehend the significance of the time with which they are dealing. After Pozzo and Lucky's appearance in the first act, Didi and Gogo take up their familiar word-play, in which Beckett reveals not only the humorous, music-hall type confrontation, but also the confused time references, the relativity of unjustified experience. Pozzo leaves the stage driving Lucky on ahead of him, and Gogo and Didi pause to reflect:

> Vladimir: That passed the time.
> Estragon: It would have passed in any case.
> Vladimir: Yes, but not so rapidly.
> *pause*
> Estragon: What do we do now?
> Vladimir: I don't know.
> Estragon: Let's go.
> Vladimir: We can't.
> Estragon: Why not?
> Vladimir: We're waiting for Godot.
> Estragon: (*despairingly*). Ah!
> *pause*

Vladimir: How they've changed
Estragon: Who
Vladimir: Those two.
Estragon: That's the idea, let's make a little conversation.

[32]

In this dialogue, the characters are trying to pass time just as they are trying to determine the extent and meaning of time; their waiting is not, in usual terms, a process which is defined by the thing for which one waits, but is defined by the quality of permanence which it possesses: the very act of waiting is itself defined by time. In this way, Beckett has altered the familiar frame of reference in order to dissolve the implications of both time and identity. Gogo and Didi cannot determine whether or not they saw Pozzo and Lucky the day before, or whether Godot sent the same messenger to them before, for all customary standards and relations are done away with by the indefinite quality of "Words, words" (38). Like Rozencrantz and Guildenstern, they feel compelled to analyze their situation, not with the hope that they will come to a better understanding of it, but with the hope that they can make their waiting seem less meaningless than it really is. Even in this hope, though, Didi can observe that "habit is a great deadener" (58), for it is also habit which preserves the unchangeable quality of their waiting. Gogo and Didi are thus left with little else to affirm but the seemingly permanent state of their waiting and their relationship to each other. "I can't go on like this," Gogo tells Didi at the end of the play. Didi merely replies, "That's what you think" (60).

We may recall Mother Courage's declaration to the idealistic soldier that "you *can* put up with injustice" (MCandHC, p. 172), but, in comparing the two plays, we sense that we move from a world which demands self-motivation and avarice to one which will destroy even those qualities. Here, characters endure, without any incentive to survive and profit by their survival; instead, they endure and are encouraged in their endurance by their companions. It is significant that one character's dependence on another is important to Beckett and Pinter's drama, for such dependence shows that the isolation described is not wholly individual isolation but is, as we mentioned before, an isolation which is externalized and imposed on the world and all those who are in it. Beckett is careful to temper this dependence with humour, for

indeed the slap-stick comedy of Waiting for Godot relies on the interplay between Gogo and Didi: Gogo: "We weren't made for the same road."; Didi: "It's not certain."; Gogo: "No, nothing is certain" (85). Uncertainty breeds isolation, but because nothing is certain, so even companionship or separation is uncertain. We need to make a distinction between this type of relationship among characters and that among characters in other plays, such as those of Ibsen or Brecht. Individual characters in Beckett's plays do not destroy other characters' expectations, for the state of defeat is as permanent as opportunity is unavailable. Thus one character's despair or frustration is reflected in that of another character, for two lives differ not so much in circumstance as in quality. For example, Gogo contemplates the remains of his carrot: "...Funny, the more you eat the worse it gets."

> Vladimir: With me it's just the opposite.
> Estragon: In other words?
> Vladimir: I get use to the muck as I go along.
> Estragon: [*after prolonged reflection*]. Is that the opposite?
> Vladimir: Question of temperament.
> Estragon: Of character.
> Vladimir: Nothing you can do about it.
> Estragon: No use struggling.
> Vladimir: One is what one is.
> Estragon: No use wriggling.
> Vladimir: The essential doesn't change.
>
> [14]

Lucky enters directly after this speech, nearly strangled by the rope that Pozzo puts on him, but all the characters realise to some extent that they are tethered to ropes which are not always of their own making. Even their relationships to one another are ropes of a sort, although the characters seem to fear such bonds less than they do those which tie them to the unknown, as both Gogo and Didi fear their undefined relationship to Godot. Didi and Gogo need affirmation from their small society just as Pozzo needs affirmation and support from his underling and those characters whom he encounters in his travels. These characters' attempt to define their lives through the encounters they have with others--or the expected encounters they have with others, such as Godot--in order to overcome their fear that their lives are circumscribed by an unalterable, irrefutable existence known as death.

Beckett's plays, perhaps more than those of Pinter, seem to be confined by death as the expected terminus for the waiting games which the characters play. Of course, death is inevitable and encourages no possibility of escape, yet the immobility which is associated with death becomes associated with the lives of Beckett's characters, who follow existences which are basically stagnant because they are unwilling or are unable to alter their habits, because they cannot even achieve as definite a state as death. Again, we see how masks permanently define the identity of their wearers. Yet even in this stasis, the characters suffer, lacking anything final or determinate with which they might justify their lives. For even in their endless playing of the same parts in the same game, the characters are struggling for some meaning to their senseless existence. Repetition can itself be a balm, for as Gogo tells Didi, "We always find something...to give us the impression we exist" (44). At least in repetition, there is some comfort in a pattern which has recognizable consequences, for both Gogo and Didi fear their ends. They reflect that one of the crucified thieves was saved and one damned, and they cannot be certain what fate--if any--they will receive. Unable to understand the concept of time, they are equally unwilling to ponder the complications of eternity, and so Beckett implies that questioning the processes of life and death is meaningless, for one is as inevitable as the other. Pozzo, when questioned about the occurrence of his blindness in the second act, is enraged:

> Have you not done tormenting me with your accursed time! It's abominable! When! When! One day, is that not enough for you, one day he [Lucky] went dumb, one day I went blind, one day we'll go deaf, one day we were born, one day we shall die, the same day, the same second, is that not enough for you? (*calmer*) They give birth astride of a grave, the light gleams an instant, then it's night once more.
> [57]

Death may be all-encompassing in Beckett's plays, but is should be mentioned again that the "night" is not one of complete desperation, the concatenation of time does not negate feeling, or humour, or companionship. If nothing else, these qualities stand out all the more because they have little application to the death which is expected, but which never comes in the plays.

When characters realize that they cannot work for their own advantage in a world circumscribed by death, they become pawns to that larger force which overwhelms them with

its uncertainty and apparent stagnation; they play a game which, because it is not of their own making, recognizes no rules. In Endgame, Beckett may liken the life of Hamm and his companions to a "game" because they are caught up in a cycle of words and responses from which they are unable to escape. There is some inevitability in the cyclical pattern, as we saw in Waiting for Godot, but we also detect an inevitable end which is reflected in the defeat of Hamm's past and present expectations. He, like Gogo and Didi, is a creature of habit, but his suffering is partly due to his misunderstanding of the end which will come to him. He endeavours to do everything he can to bring death closer, and in the process, he denies his own identity and existence. Thus in working for what he most desires, he brings about the defeat of his own expectations. We could say that this defeat is partly due to misunderstanding of time and man's relation to it, to Hamm's ignorance of the way in which the game must be played, but we need to recognize that in a world in which past expectations are defeated, in which there are no expectations for hope or even for death, there can be no knowledge of the self. Brecht's world, antagonistic to man, is turned inside out so that we have characters who cannot acknowledge themselves and a world which cannot acknowledge its characters.

The apocalyptic quality of the stage world enforces this lack of affirmation, for the room that Hamm inhabits, as well as the landscape outside the two windows, both reflect his inability and unwillingness to undertake change; he does not wish to stave off his inevitable death. Time seems unchanged, and the characters themselves are immobile. As in Waiting for Godot, immobility of character is defined by the duration of and confusion over time. Beckett intensifies the stagnation of the characters' lives here by defining this immobility also by the characters' anticipation of a future event, in this case, by death, itself an intransient state. Gogo and Didi long for release from the meaningless cycle of days, but Hamm longs for a permanent dissolution of this cycle, through meaningless, to a state which he can define as something irrefutable, something truly impersonal. His existence, spent anticipating and working for this death, only seems permanent in his suffering and personal in its destruction of his expectations. As such, the conditions of his existence are reflected in Clov's existence, for the two men ask themselves the same questions and attempt to satisfy themselves with the same

answers:

> Hamm: Have you not had enough?
> Clov: Yes!
> *pause*
> Of What?
> Hamm: Of this. . .this. . .thing.
> Clov: I always had.
> *pause*
> Not you?
> Hamm *gloomily*: Then there's no reason for it to change.
> Clov: It may end.
> *pause*
> All life long the same questions, the same answers.
>
> [EG: p. 5]

Life appears to be denied that very vital force which characterizes it, whereas we can see that "death" is gradually redefined as the play proceeds to incorporate its own condition of limitlessness, not a condition characterized by an "end" of any sort. In life, Hamm and Clov continually ask themselves the same questions and comment upon the futility of the answers to which they must resort, yet the comical nature of their questioning is not lost of them.

Even more so than in Waiting for Godot, Beckett allows his characters to acknowledge the humour of their actions, though they can only discern the frustration in their meaningless maneuvers. Like Hedda Gabbler, one of Beckett's characters can refer life as a "farce," but where Hedda rebels against the monotony of engaging in society with others who cannot realize her own interests--when she herself lacks the courage to achieve her own desires--the Beckett character feels disgust with his own spirit and thereby perpetuates the monotony of his life. As an audience, we realize the blindness and self-induced torment of their clownish, repetitive actions, actions which are all the more comical because they are undertaken with the still unsinkable belief that an end is possible. Beckett's plays have an interesting duality to them, for on the one hand, Beckett argues that life is as meaningless as it ought to be, and on the other hand, he describes the efforts of his characters to ascribe meaning to the condition of their meaninglessness. Clov and Hamm long to lose their identities in order to bring about their long anticipated death, but they cannot accept their frustration without searching for a meaning:

Clov: Why this farce day after day?
Hamm: Routine. One never knows.
* *
Clov!
Clov: Yes.
Hamm: What's happening?
Clov: Something is taking its course.
pause
Hamm: Clov!
Clov *impatiently*: What is it?
Hamm: We're not beginning to. . . to. . . mean something?
Clov: Mean something! You and I mean something!
(*brief laugh*)
Ah that's a good one!
Hamm: I wonder.
* *
To think it won't have been all for nothing!

[pp. 32, 33]

At this point, Clov discovers that he has a flea, and another expectation is defeated, for the discovery of a flea, just as the discovery of a boy later on, discredits Hamm's assertion that he and Clov are moving closer to death.

Thus the characters want to control life to the extent that they will lose their identities and thereby anticipate death, yet they lack this control because they forget the implications of other actions, of other lives. Hamm's longing for death undercuts any importance which can be attached to human life, yet the perpetuity to which both Clov and Hamm are striving itself is an affirmation of something. The sanctity which is often attached to human life is called into question, and yet Beckett does not belittle the tenderness which one man may show to another. In Brecht, we saw how Mother Courage's strong desire for self-preservation jeopardized the lives of her children, and yet she did maintain an affection for them. Similarly, here we see how human relationships are challenged by the meaninglessness of existence, and yet they still endure, as an affirmation of the small bit of control which men still have over their own lives and emotions. Even in Endgame, there is still a lot of tenderness which one character shows to another, as in Nagg's concern for his son and wife, and Clov's concern for his master. The order for which these characters crave--the order which sustains society, love, friendship, and, most importantly, self-knowledge--conflicts with the disorder which they struggle to know, the

abandonment which they are never able to achieve. "I love order," Clov tells Hamm. "It's my dream. A world where all would be silent and still and each thing in its last place, under the last dust" (p. 57). When Clov makes such a statement, Hamm condemns him. We see that none of Beckett's characters can impose his "order" or his appreciation of existence on another; he will always be defeated by the ordering of the time which he cannot understand and by the imposition of other men and other existences for which he cannot account. Even in his relationships to others, he can find neither order nor control. The cycle of life perpetuates itself continuously, irrevocably, much as Hamm's own story perpetuates itself. "Will it not soon be the end?" asks Clov about the story, to which Hamm replies, "I'm afraid it will." Clov, in spite of his anxiety to be at the end of the story, at the end of his suffering and service to Hamm, knows too well that Hamm will "make up another" (p. 61), even when Hamm asserts, "I'm warming up for my last soliloquy" (p. 78). Beckett does not imply that the "last soliloquy" will never come; he shows that it has arrived and is endless.

Clov, Hamm, and even Nagg and Nell suffer for the consequences of actions they never meant to take, prayers they never knew the implications of. "You cried for night; it falls: now cry in darkness," Hamm tells himself at the conclusion of the play, when he believes that Clov has left him (p.88). But Clov has not left him; he remains behind, standing in the doorway. Even this expectation is defeated, so things, instead of coming together at the end, have fallen away even farther from what man can apprehend. Isolation seems to be even more intense; the individual seems to be more excluded from his own affairs and those of others than before. "Absent, always," Hamm laments to Clov. "It all happened without me. I don't know what's happened" (p. 74). The irony of the end of the play is that Hamm does not even realize the extent of his isolation, the extent of his absence from the life of the past, from the consciousness of others' present affairs, and from the death and permanence which he so desires. Perhaps the worst of the consequences of his earlier actions and responses to life are hidden from him; he initiated the process by which he is defeated and preserved in a static environment, but the cycle to which he contributed continues beyond his appreciation and understanding. "'Our revels now are ended,'" Hamm quotes to Clov earlier in the play, but the play's conclusion shows

us that although the play itself is over, nothing is resolved, and whatever sort of "revels" that Hamm and his companions had are still in the process of playing themselves out, or are as insubstantial and as meaningless as the world which they help to describe. None of these characters will find that his life is "rounded off with a sleep" or with anything less than the cycle of uncertainty.

Individual initiative is denied or undermined by the condition of life and existence for Gogo and Didi, for Clov, Hamm and his parents, but the irresolution of their lives carries with it the implication that man would not make anything of his life even if he were to achieve even part of his desires. Hamm does not fully realise the consequences of his actions; his blindness, as Pozzo's blindness, is a physical manifestation of this lack of awareness. The body, in the terms of Pirandello, reflects the mask which the man assumes, which the conditions of his life demand. Hamm cannot recognize any other self but that which he is at the present time; he does not even recognize this self as completely as he might. We can see how Beckett, by exploring the consequences of strong external factors in Endgame, would leave the examination of internal consequences to another play. Realization is not exclusive in that play, but it could be explicit in a play which manages to capture the different selves of the past in order to set them in confrontation with the static state of the character in the present; it would be as if we had several Hamms all playing the same role in succession, all asking the same questions. Except we might find that the questions would be phrased differently, and the answers might have different implications when hope is not deadened and defeat is not so certain. Even under these conditions, however, we would not escape from Beckett's all-inclusive cyclical, pervasive scheme of time. We would see that the significant matter of the past, as apprehended by one of the past selves, would contribute to the meaninglessness of the present, as apprehended by a self which differs from that earlier one only in experience and resolve.

In Krapp's Last Tape, Beckett reveals those various selves which make up a man and which decide the condition of his life, and such a revelation is accomplished through the medium of an entirely impersonal, but impressionable instrument: the tape recorder. In its impressionability, the machine is rather like a man, responding and recording. But the control

which it has, in preserving remnants of the past, is greater than that which any man can have, for the tape maintains its identity through the passage of time, unlike the man. And it is here that we see the significance of the confrontation between man and machine and the irony of the title of the play: there is no "last" tape, no end to the monotony of Krapp's life, since all his reactions and observations are captured on tape, which can be rewound and played again, for Krapp to relive once more. Cyclical time thus becomes mechanical time, instigated and perpetuated by man, who confuses past and present and thereby misconstrues his identity. The dehumanization of the character which we saw in Hamm's earnest appeal for death and loss of identity is here achieved through the confusion of past and present. As things of importance become absurd, so Krapp himself alters from a man of dreams to only a caricature of a man, except Beckett reverses the process that time and effort achieved, by showing us the older Krapp before we learn the impressions of the younger. In this way, Beckett can make Krapp's isolation all the more great, his release in drink all the more comic and condemnatory. Krapp is not a man defeated by past occurrences or missed opportunities, for he cannot even remember the situations that the tapes so clearly reveal. In this mechanistic, self-contained and self-perpetuating world, the expectations of the past are derided by the indifference of the present. Beckett shows this derision most effectively as Krapp reads the ledger of his tapes: "...memorable equinox. (*He raises his head, stares blankly front. Puzzled.*) Memorable equinox?... (*Pause. He shrugs his shoulders, peers again at ledger, reads*) Farewell to--(*he turns the page*)--love" (KLT: p.18). The difference between Krapp's world and that of Endgame is that in the earlier play, we find a world indifferent to man and man struggling to be indifferent to it and to himself, whereas here we see that man is truly indifferent to himself, so much so that we need not be aware of the world as it is, but only as it was in the past, as it might have been.

We see Krapp onstage, illuminated, for the most part, by a strong overhead light which sets him off from the darkness on the stage, except when he ventures to the back for another swig from his bottle. The isolation implied in such staging is made more evident by the impersonality of the tapes and by the comments on past feelings of isolation which the tapes convey, isolation which qualifies Krapp's position before us. The tape which records the

thirty-nine year old Krapp reveals the significance of the lamp which we see above Krapp: "The new light above my table is a great improvement. With all this darkness round me I feel less alone. (*Pause*) In a way. (*Pause*) I love to get up and move about in it, then back here to ...(*Hesitates*)... me. (*Pause*) Krapp" (pp. 14, 15). This observation, tied as it is to the situation which we see directly before us, prepares us for the correlation between present and past which Krapp makes as he listens, and rewinds, and listens again to these tapes. The past reflects upon the present, and the present in turn reflects upon the past. This reflection of present instance on past observation, and vice-versa, is no more apparent than in the recording of the younger Krapp deriding an even younger Krapp's expectations, for, via the recorder, even the past can reflect on itself, and so we have another seemingly endless cycle of response and reflection. Krapp listens to his thirty-nine year old self saying, "Hard to believe that I was ever that young whelp. The voice! Jesus! And the aspirations! (*Brief laugh in which Krapp joins*) And the resolutions! (*Brief laugh in which Krapp joins*) To drink less, in particular. (*Brief laugh in which Krapp joins*)" (p. 16). Resolutions, like expectations, become more ridiculous as time passes, as the human being becomes more intractable and less identifiable for what it was. Krapp disassociates the past selves from his present selves, and he does not wish to be reminded of the feeble attempts at self-knowledge which the tapes record. It is as if he discredits the impetuous nature of his youth and fears the lack of self-examination which he makes of his own life now. The identities which he sought for himself in the past all failed, and he does not want his present failure to be judged by the idealism and expectations of his past. He avoids being his own judge, as it were. At the same time, however, he does not want past realisations to discredit his expectations about the present, for all the times of his life are equally vulnerable to his own castigation. An earlier Krapp recounts, "What I suddenly saw then was this, that the belief I had been going on all my life, namely--(*Krapp switches off impatiently, winds tape forward...*)" (p. 21), for the present Krapp is as impatient with the past as the past Krapp is impatient for the present to be achieved.

Distanced as he is from his past selves, Krapp can laugh and scorn the impressionable nature of his youth, yet he is still to some extent blind from his own present

impressionableness. The description of the young Krapp's encounter with the woman in the punt stands out from the catalogue of physical complaints and the illusions of the past and present, for it is a moment of true transcendence which contradicts the cycle of time in which Krapp is caught:

> We drifted in among the flags and stuck. The way they went down, sighing, before the stem! (*Pause*) I lay down across her with my face in her breasts and my hand on her. We lay there without moving. But under us all moved, and moved us, gently, up and down, and from side to side.
>
> [p. 23; also 27]

Present and past isolation are set against this encounter, and the description of the encounter itself embraces Krapp's account of his present situation: the defeat of his expectations as a writer, the increase in his physical complaints. The woman herself is another dream lost in actuality but preserved on tape and reintroduced to Krapp's memory and life. This play ends with the irony of past vigour and present langour, or, more clearly, present immobility which reflects that of the past, even though such immobility was not anticipated.

> Past midnight. Never knew such silence. The earth might be uninhabited.
> *Pause.*
> Here I end this reel....Perhaps my best years are gone. When there was a chance of happiness. But I wouldn't want them back. Not with the fire in me now. No, I wouldn't want them back.
> *Krapp motionless staring before him. The tape runs on in silence.*
>
> [p. 28]

Krapp realizes his isolation from his past and from his present self, for it is as if his past self merely continued its existence, unchanged in situation and condition, although with its perspective altered; at the conclusion of the play, even the distinctions among the earlier Krapps and the present one become difficult to make, for the tape runs on, recording the present against the past, recording both conditions at once, exchanging the one for the other and leaving each in uncertainty. The young Krapp does not want his earlier years back; we are not certain whether or not the older Krapp wants those years back either, but we realize, at the conclusion of this play, that he has them back, at least in the sense that all his years will be

catalogued and recorded against that one moment of transcendence.

Krapp cannot depend on another for sustenance in his present world, for there is no other creature to be found; he only has a memory whose intensity he relives in an effort to circumvent the idle nature and insufficiency of his days. His powerlessness over present circumstance is revealed through his consumption of bananas and alcohol, his relish of seemingly meaningless words such as "spool," and his dependence on a machine which, in all its impersonality, is able to tell him more about that self which he has become than he can remember. Such powerlessness is, of course, self-imposed, and this greater emphasis on individual responsibility, coupled as it is with Beckett's emphasis on his character's isolation, enhances the sense we have of man as a comic character, a caricature of all that we would like to idealize in human nature. Such emphasis is similar to that which Pinter puts on his own characters, for the two playwrights both stress man's inability to capture time for himself, his inability to unite his own ideals and perceptions of life with those of others.

Isolation is thus contained as much inside man as it is within his world, though, as we see Beckett hinting at a description of a dualistic universe, in Krapp's Last Tape, isolation can also be maintained in the individual lives of the characters. Such an approach is similar to that used by Chekhov, though in the case of Beckett and Pinter, we understand that the characters' dependence on others challenges their own understanding of their identities. This concern with maintaining one's views of one's self in the society of others is reminiscent of Ibsen, though again we need to make a distinction between a world in which the individual cannot realize himself, due to conflicting forces in society, and a world which does not recognise the individual, where society is neither important nor all-powerful. We cannot even speak of forces which are hostile to the individual, as those are in Brecht and O'Casey, for in this drama, hostility exists only as perceived by the audience. Often, even the characters are unaware of the defeat of their own expectations. A community of men, in Pinter's drama especially, cannot force one man to follow its mores; it can only deny him that affirmation which he seeks from others. Krapp is excluded from such a society, but in interaction with others in his past, his dependence on others is destroyed along with his expectations. At this

stage in the analysis of these plays, then, we can see the difference between the drama of Beckett and Pinter and that of earlier playwrights: before, characters met the destruction of their expectations with little loss in the faith of their dependence on others, on the orders and traditions of society, on forms or masks which they adopted for self-protection. They might meet the horror deriving from a realization that such dependence might backfire, but they never fully understand that there might be nothing whatsoever behind their dependence.

In Beckett and Pinter's plays, however, dependence is meaningless; it has no context in that world which man thinks he knows, that world which man can never fully understand. Thus if we carry the extent of isolation even further, in Pinter's drama, to include that degree of separation between men, which reflects the isolation of man from his environment, we perceive the move toward the emphasis on greater powerlessness, toward nihilism. Yet this sort of examination of man's dependance on others is also ironic, even comic, because an effort is ridiculous which is as earnest as it is baseless. Nihilism can therefore be comic in itself, since man can neither be independent of it nor dependent on it. In The Caretaker, for example, Davies and Mick are characters whose expectations have little basis because they combine an affirmation of dependence on others with a desire to be independent. Throughout the play, Davies refers to his expected journey to retrieve his papers from Sidcup: "I'll be down there any day, I tell you. I was going down today, but I'm. . . I'm waiting for the weather to break" (TCT: p. 51).[2] His immobility is self-imposed, unlike that of a Gogo, Didi, or Hamm, but it does reflect his loss of identity in this world. Even with the capacity to make changes in his life, Davies can find little to acknowledge in himself. He is elected "caretaker" of Mick and Aston's house because they themselves are unwilling to take care of things, to actuate changes in their own lives, but when he can scarcely take care of himself, cannot break through the barriers which the brothers impose on their lives, his position reflects an inefficiency and indifference to man which life also reflects.

Mick's immobility is equally self-imposed, since he is also reluctant to make changes, although he persists in asserting indifference to the stagnation in which he lives; his aggression and violence reveal his frustration and hypocrisy. He is a Hamm who still believes

that there is something to affirm for himself, although he knows that those around him cannot affirm anything for their lives:

> I don't stand still. I'm moving about, all the time. I'm moving. . . all the time. I've got to think about the future. I'm not worried about this house. I'm not interested. My brother can worry about it. He can do it up, he can decorate it. He can do what he likes with it. I'm not bothered. I thought I was doing him a favour, letting him live here. He's got his own ideas. Let him have them. I'm going to chuck it in.
>
> [p. 74]

This assertion of independence is comic, because, like Davies, Mick cannot "chuck it in," cannot allow his own ideas to exist independently of those of others. In this, he resembles Davies more than he would like to believe. He needs a "caretaker," but does not wish to acknowledge such a need, just as he does not wish to acknowledge the concern he feels for his brother. Mick defeats his expectations, just as Davies does, through the conscious denial of circumstance and opportunity. Both men's situations are ironic because neither man can deny his hypocrisy. We could not even go so far as to say that masks exist in their world, for the artifice of Davies and Mick's expectations is too thin to allow for much misunderstanding of the ultimate defeat of these expectations. They inhabit an indifferent world, and by struggling to be equally indifferent to others and to themselves, they intensify their feelings of futility and desperation.

Helplessness is not without its place in Pinter's world, however, for Pinter shows us how compulsion, in Davies's fabrications and Mick's angry denial, can produce a helplessness of its own. He also describes a helplessness derived through no fault of the individual, for Aston's admission to the mental hospital, where his stand against oppression resulted in the deterioration of his mental capacity, is not self-imposed. He realises that his expectations must be small ones, and so he makes the construction of a shed in his backyard an ideal. The building of this shed is at once an affirmation of his identity and a proof of his ability, but construction is never even begun. Aston puts so much emphasis on this shed that it represents the control that he would like to have over his life, for he asserts that he can do no other work before the shed is completed. As a result, the shed also represents the futility of Aston's own

longing for independence, for such longing must necessarily be defeated because of his reliance on others. "I'm going to be very busy," he tells Davies when he is trying to dismiss him. "I've got that shed to get up. If I don't get it up now it'll never go up. Until it's up I can't get started" (p.76). Davies offers to help him in the shed's building, but Aston reasserts his desire to construct his shed alone. It is ironic that Aston's attempt at independence induces Davies's assertion of dependence, for as soon as Davies comprehends that he is not wanted anymore, he pleads for a place in their house and their affections: "Listen. . . if I. . . got down. . . if I was to. . . get my papers. . . would you. . . would you let. . . " and so on (p. 78). In other words, he is affecting a helplessness which is greater than that which Aston defies, and Pinter may be implying that the sort of self-induced defeat and isolation which Davies brings upon himself may be more of an obstacle than the defeat which is forced upon an innocent character. Although it is difficult to distinguish compulsion from provocation, we ought to be aware that dependence and self-reliance are motivated by two distinct factors in Pinter's drama. Pinter distinguishes characters' responses in order to illustrate the pervasive quality of the defeat, or, more accurately, the denial of man's expectations, and in this way, he shows how the condition of men's lives is one of constant stagnation and uncertainty.

The isolation of one character from another and the opposition between one character's understanding and that of another is revealed when the concept of time is introduced to the analysis of uncertainty and stagnation, as it is in No Man's Land. The importance of memory is again asserted, and the stagnation of life in this play is reminiscent of Endgame, although Pinter, unlike Beckett, tends to emphasize isolation of character more than isolation of environment. We recognize the description of No Man's Land, which Hirst first describes as a place which "does not move. . . or change. . . or grow old. . . [which] remains. . . forever. . . icy. . . silent" (NML; p. 84), as a variation of the apocalyptic world of Endgame, unalterable through the consequences of the characters' actions and the indifference of the world which they have to inhabit. Pinter demonstrates the way in which the characters have subordinated themselves to their environment at the beginning of the play, when we learn, humorously enough, that both Hirst and Spooner choose to drink their liquor "as it is" (p. 15), for they tend to take their

existence as it is, although they could potentially alter the form of their life if they choose to. We recognize the futility and indulgence of Hirst's speeches, which are reminiscent of those of Hamm, although we detect a struggle for meaning, though not change, in Hirst's approach to his life. On the one hand, Hirst asserts the truth of his isolation by observing, "There are places in my heart. . . where no living soul. . . has. . . or can ever. . . trespass" (p. 84), but such observations are tempered by his requests for support from others. When Briggs and Foster join Hirst and Spooner for drinks, Hirst tells Spooner, "Something is depressing me."

> What is it? It was the dream, yes....Water. Drowning. Not me. Someone else. How nice to have company. Can you imagine waking up, finding no-one there, just furniture, staring at you?....I've been through that period--cheers--I came round to human beings in the end. Like yourselves. A wise move. I tried laughing alone. Pathetic.
>
> (p. 44)

The humour of this speech undercuts the pomposity while it enhances the sterility of Hirst's life, for Hirst's society is all self-defined. Others drown in it just as they drown in their own isolation, and Hirst, by forcing others to submit themselves to this sterility and isolation, comes to realize that he is only solidifying his own unchangeable state. He may not laugh alone, but all are laughing in their own uncertainty and insubstantiality, so Hirst might as well be alone in his No Man's Land.

Hirst's dream is a curious reflection of his use of other people, for the other characters do tend to drown, in that they fail to achieve their expectations, though the characters do not drown only because of Hirst's influence. He holds a mirror to their actions, as it were, and yet this process of reflecting a man's condition in a dream or in conversation works both ways, for the other characters also reflect Hirst's own defeat and seemingly meaningless life. "It was I drowning in your dream," Spooner tells Hirst, and Hirst falls to the ground (p. 47). It is almost as if the process of defining one element of their condition in life abnegates any identity for the other elements. One life imposes itself on another, and life imposes itself on itself, with equally destructive, uncertain, and humorous consequences. The humorous aspect of their confrontations is shown in Hirst and Spooner's conversations, in which each continually

betters the other in the fabrication of his identity. The more destructive aspect of such an imposition is shown in Spooner's responses to Hirst's predicament, for we see that Spooner, in offering himself as Hirst's friend and, later, his companion, imposes himself on Hirst as much as he submits to Hirst's imposition on him. In a sense, he resembles Davies in his willingness to compromise himself for a position which will be in accord with the identity he recognizes for himself. Early in the play, Spooner declares that he finds "security...in the confirmation that I elicit from people of all kinds a common and constant level of indifference. It assures me that I am as I think myself to be, that I am fixed, concrete" (p. 17). A desire to maintain a fixed identity is common to most characters in Beckett and Pinter's plays, for the defeat of early expectations--a defeat self-induced or inflicted from without-- encourages a character to seek some justification for his being. "I was one of the golden of my generation," Spooner tells Hirst. "Something happened. I don't know what it was. Nevertheless I am I and I have survived insult and deprivation" (p. 89). Needless to say, this testimony to independence conflicts with Spooner's willingness to submit to another's authority. In such a longing for and pride in security, however, Spooner does not differ from Hirst, except Spooner recognizes the dangers of relying on others in this way. He describes his approach to "peeping" to Hirst:

> ...when you can't keep the proper distance between yourself and others, when you can no longer maintain an objective relation to matter, the game's not worth the candle, so forget it and remember that what is obligatory to keep in your vision is space, space in moonlight particularly, and lots of it.
>
> [p. 19]

The object is to preserve one's self-control at the same time that one associates with others for "confirmation" of one's identity; this process involves a tricky balance between humility and complacency, two qualities not so much opposed in this No Man's Land as one would think. When personal reference is allowed such liberties in argument and conversation, there is not so much of an opposition between supposed polarities in human conduct.

Suitably enough, Pinter illustrates how difficult it is for a character to maintain the "proper distance" between himself and others in the present scheme of time, but he, like

Beckett, uses the past to show the desperation of man's attempt to control his world. Thus, just as humility and complacency are set against each other, so also the past is set against the present. The present evokes the past for Hirst, and the past defines the present. Here, however, we find no masquerade demanding fixed roles from people, no tape recorder limiting the exaggeration and controlling the memories of the past, but instead, we have a photograph album which captures instances in time for later elaboration. Unlike Spooner, Hirst preserves his identity not through eliciting indifference from others but through the definitions which he imposes on others in his past:

> My true friends look out at me from my album. I had my world. I have it. Don't think now that it's gone I'll choose to sneer at it, to cast doubt on it, to wonder if it properly existed.
> *
> It's gone. Did it exist? It's gone. It never existed. It remains.
> I am sitting here forever.
>
> [p. 46]

Memory is of course the tie between past and present, for through its means the past is able to continue into the present: "I am sitting here forever." Stagnation results from the confusion between the two schemes of time and from the disassociation of man from others; Hirst is unaware that the importance which he places on the past severs the bonds between himself and his friends and supporters. For example, while he continues his indulgence in drink, Hirst encourages Briggs and Foster to join him, imploring them to "Be sociable. Consort with the society to which you're attached. To which you're attached as if by bonds of steel. Mingle" (p. 85). But since he fails to recognise that their "society" does not exist solely on his terms, he disregards their "attachment" to each other. Such attachment is one dependent on mutual use, for it is meant to abnegate that attachment which Hirst is trying to destroy, indeed, which all the characters are trying to destroy, namely their remembrance of past defeats and the present consequences of failed expectations. In a sense, the characters long to make attachments to people and circumstances in the present, but they are unable to live completely in the present because they are tied to the past. In speaking of the characters in his photo album, then, Hirst is

also speaking of himself, that self which is defined by its relation to those memories:

> Allow the love of the good ghost. They possess all that emotion. . . trapped. Bow to it. It will assuredly never release them. . . who knows how they may quicken.....You think it cruel. . . to quicken them, when they are fixed, imprisoned? No. Deeply, deeply, they wish to respond to your touch, to your look, and when you smile, their joy. . . is unbounded. And so I say to you, tender the dead, as you would yourself be tendered, now, in what you describe as your life.
> [p. 79]

Hirst imagines that the people in the photographs are fixed and yet can respond to recognition made of them in the present time, much as he can respond, in his fixed position, to recognition of his past life. In this way, past and present resolve themselves into a time which knows nothing of circumstance, which is No Man's Land.

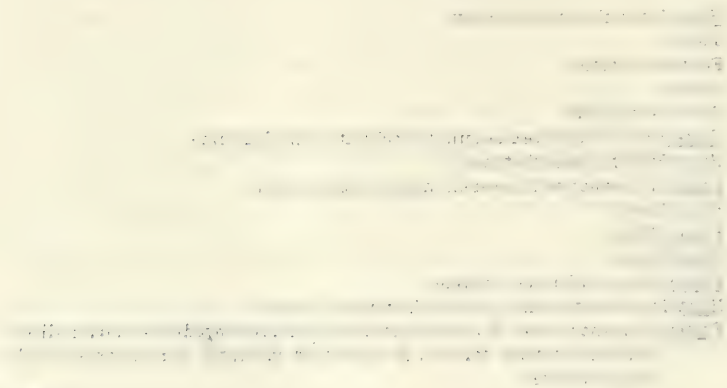
We see now that the stasis which is characteristic of the life portrayed in this play, and in the other plays examined in this chapter, is a product of characters' dependence on the past. This dependence is due to either longing for better days or despair for missed opportunities, but it is a reliance which forces men to cling to time which is irrevocable, and because it is irrevocable, its unchangeable nature makes men's life equally inalterable. In many instances, a man can do no better than to "allow the love of the good ghost," because one's efforts are irredeemable; there are actions for which no futher action can atone. We can see how Beckett and Pinter redefine the nature of reality in order to ensure that isolation of character or environment and dependence on the past or on others need not be mutually exclusive conditions of this reality. As mentioned before, this description of life is essentially humorous, for confusion and isolation both belittle the integrity of man, and audience and character long to believe that there is indeed some integrity to a human being. Humour need not condemn; it need only ridicule. And it is significant that in plays which describe a reality less tractable and more bleak than that described in earlier plays, humour lends itself not simply as a measure of relief but as a means for further redefinition of the human experience. Circumstances may be inalterable, but man's stubbornness, allied as it is with a host of other faults, is a great contributor to stasis and stagnation. Beckett and Pinter's characters may not believe that they

have much power to alter the course of events, but, ironically enough, it is their very frustration with their powerlessness which destroys what little incentive and influence they might have. We might even be able to say that these characters are their own worst enemies, for they are reluctant to consider the possibilities of what most concerns them. Hirst, for example, refuses to deal with the present, for he believes that he cannot fulfill his talents. Spooner suggests that Hirst read some of his work to a select audience in a public house, but his suggestion is met with silence. Hirst, still in a drunken stupor, responds to the suggestion after a few moments:

> Hirst: Let us change the subject.
> *Pause*
> For the last time.
> *Pause*
> What have I said?
> Foster: You said you're changing the subject for the last time.
> Hirst: But what does that mean?
> Foster: It means you'll never change the subject again.
> Hirst: Never?
> Foster: Never.
> Hirst: Never?
> Foster: You said for the last time.
> Hirst: But what does that *mean*? What does it *mean*?
> Foster: It means forever. It means that the subject is changed once and for all and for the last time forever. If the subject is winter, for instance, it'll be winter forever.
>
> [p. 98]

This dialogue is comical, but it also explains why some characters assume that nothing will ever change; it explains why some characters do not want circumstances to change. It also sheds light on the reasons for describing the world as Beckett and Pinter do, since the degree of change that a character can realize in his life reflects upon the ways in which he will fulfill his expectations, or the ways he will respond to the defeat of these expectations. Other dramatists have shown that the very development of expectations is related to the level of change which a character can hope to make. Pinter and Beckett seem to assume that man can do little to affect the conditions of his life, for the isolation that they describe is a reflection and a product of the uncertainty and ignorance in man's own self.

Thus while we recognize that Beckett and Pinter's characters assume the purposelessness



of their existence, we should not always trust their judgement. They assert that the form of their existence is limited and fixed, but the lack of change which they acknowledge in themselves may imply that there is change, although, as mentioned before, they cannot recognize such change. This distinction is an important one to make, because we ought to understand that Beckett and Pinter do not intend to portray life realistically, do not mean to make the theatre reflect actual existence. Their characters, for example, are not meant to be representative of Every Man, even though the characters are the only men affirmed in the context of the play. We should take Didi's comment that both he and Gogo must come to the aid of Pozzo and Lucky because "at this moment of time, all mankind is us, whether we like it or not" (WforG; p. 51) in the context of the play, and not in the context of our own reality. At the same time, however, we should be aware that Beckett and Pinter's characters are not meant to be as particular as the characters of Brecht or Ibsen; the condition of man is fixed in the plays--Hamm points out that the suffering of his parents and his "dog" are equal to his (E, p. 2)--but the characters themselves are distinct. In other words, instead of asserting the truth of their view of reality, Beckett and Pinter are interested in describing not what is probable, not what might be an extreme from the usual form of existence, but what is still within the range of human possibility. As such, their drama, as much as it is intended to reflect the stasis of the world it describes with its emphasis on repetition and undefined time, is opposed to the description of that life insofar as it is an art form. As such, it represents man's manipulation of a form which can no longer be assumed to be fixed and static. This duality between probability, or possibility, and futility, or immobility of form and time, is at the heart of Beckett and Pinter's drama, since the constraints that are put upon the characters are nearly the same as those which are put upon the audience, and man needs to believe in possibility, even when he is presented with an unchangeable situation. The content of the drama becomes nearly synonymous with the art form, but just as we should not trust the characters' judgements of their condition, so we ought not to trust our own, and so both Beckett and Pinter seek to sever our hold on our own perceptions, seek to reveal the uncertainty that is inherent in man's judgement and comprehension.

Conclusion

In the plays of Beckett and Pinter, we see how characters reach back to the past in order to impose definitions on others and avoid a confrontation with the defeat of their own past expectations. Their characters, like those of other dramatists, have difficulty handling present circumstances, as is shown by their reluctance to interact with others. Yet the conflict between these characters' dependence on others and their struggle to confirm their independence from others is a familiar topic in this drama. Beckett and Pinter may subordinate a character's actions to his responses in their plays, but we are nevertheless aware of the existence of factors which necessitate such responses. Similarly, we are aware that the challenge made to an individual character to conform to the conditions of life as he knows it is as much a product of other characters' expectations as it is a source of his further delusion. The analysis made of the plays in the previous chapters shows that the existence of expectations is problematic in men's lives, even though such an existence is irrefutable, and, as we have seen, necessary for certain characters. We have observed differing views made by the playwrights regarding the extent that man can alter the course of his life and affect the conditions under which he lives, but we have also noticed a consistency in the playwrights' concern with desperation, boredom, frustration, and ambivalence. None of these factors can be ascribed to one cause, nor can any of them be relieved by one character, for man lacks any exclusive control over his life. Interacting with others almost always involves a change in one's position, though one may not recognise this; ultimately, then, the different views of life which these plays and playwrights describe can be broken down into varying degrees of character self-awareness, for the dispelling or preserving of illusion is dependent on this awareness, as is the degree of freedom which a character can achieve in breaking free from the forces which oppress him. Response to defeat or conflict, understanding of the self, acknowledgement of one's relationship to all exterior factors are all inter-related, are all equally dependent on each other.

Having examined the complications of characters' lives in selected plays of these eleven

playwrights--complications whose intensity can be described although their sources cannot be adequately explained--we may reiterate the importance of these complications in modern drama by showing how these concerns are still prevalent in and applicable to contemporary dramatist's views of human life. If anything, the separate dramatizations which earlier playwrights made of the distinct conditions of life are combined in later plays, for we see how the sources of difficulty in characters' lives are self-generated and self-perpetuated. It is indeed significant that some of the more recent plays put a greater emphasis on the self and the extension of the self than on exterior factors, for we see in these plays an attempt to describe a world in which all lives are equally complicated. Certainly, Chekhov does as much in his plays, and yet he still preserves the distinctions among characters, distinctions between quality of understanding and firmness of resolution. He and Ibsen and Shaw each describe the defeat and modification of expectations mostly in terms of central characters, each of whom serves as a catalyst for others' actions, although the playwrights' use of such a hierarchy is consistent with the dramatic standards which influenced them. Brecht, O'Casey, and Pirandello also use such primary and subordinate characters, though with different consequences, since they describe a-social factors which destroy men's expectations. It is interesting to note how the use of fewer characters--the result of modern production costs and problems--in contemporary drama has contributed to a playwright's ability to describe more of a universality of experience, more of a complexity of response to exterior and interior factors. Beckett and Pinter's work, for example, shows how complex a character's response to the defeat of his expectations can be when the focus of a play is so concentrated. Since the use of a few select characters can discourage direct examination of imposing exterior factors, dramatists are able to emphasize that form of drama which is concerned specifically with the character, not with manifestations of the conflicts that he encounters. This is not to say that a dramatist denies that a character's position is influenced or controlled by exterior forces, but such a playwright subordinates an examination of them in his development of the interaction of one man with another.

As in earlier plays, we see in contemporary drama an insistence on the compromises

which a character must make when his ideas clash with those of another. Self-preservation is an important theme in Pinter's Betrayal, or Stoppard's The Real Thing, or Frayn's Benefactors, for in each of these plays, we find an examination of the difference between helping one's self to realise one's expectations and helping others to achieve their own desires. Human potential grows confused when it is brought into conflict with others' potential, and often it is diminished, whether by force or by the reluctant admission of the validity of another's argument. The characters in these three plays need one another, not just for the maintenance of their own identity, but for the illusion of selflessness with which they disguise their actions. They, like Pirandello's characters, hide behind masks which will ultimately betray them. They want to believe that there is equality in their relationships to one another, though they do not recognise that interaction with others involves change, and change can be defeated by an unwillingness to accept any terms other than their own. Interaction with others, not necessarily interaction with society, is fundamental, since such close interaction undermines any excessive emphasis on a character's isolation from outside forces, yet it can be used to describe the ways in which man consciously isolates himself from others' attentions and concerns. In this approach, we see how more contemporary playwrights have concentrated their focus, without neglecting exterior forces; each of these three dramatists shows us man as he sees himself and as others see him. Thus it is also significant that these three plays settle on marriage as a way to describe isolation, change, and conflict; by concentrating on the domestic, on the primary instincts of man, these playwrights describe the demands of a love which fights against isolation. Love is itself the measure against which character expectations are judged, and marriage is the factor neither wholly external nor wholly internal that encompasses both self-delusion and misapprehension of circumstance.

These contemporary plays are similar to earlier plays in that they examine man's capacity for self-knowledge and knowledge of circumstance, though the knowledge of the self is revealed through a character's ability to express and realise his love. In Ibsen, a character's inability to understand the implications of his choices and beliefs is ridiculed, as in Hedda Gabler, where Tesman cannot recognise the mediocrity of his scholarship and life

expectations. In Chekhov, lack of understanding is comic, as it is often in Brecht, or Stoppard, or Beckett and Pinter, yet the implications of ignorance are also pathetic and damning, as in the plays of Pirandello, Williams, O'Neill, and parts of Brecht and O'Casey. In comparing a contemporary play to these earlier plays, then, we see how humour can be underplayed in assertion of the absurdity of misunderstandings and misdirections of one's affections, as is the case in Pinter's Betrayal. Pinter is not nihilistic in this play, although he does describe man's unnecessary confusion over the implications of his actions and attitudes. Betrayal is, after all, the revelation that one is not in control, that one has deluded one's self or has the potential to delude one's self, as Jerry discovers when he questions his wife's meetings with her doctor (Bet: p. 127),[1] and, more importantly, when he discovers that Emma has told Robert about their affair (pp. 29 and 37). Jerry's expectations are defeated by Emma's revelation, because he comes to understand that he cannot have everything the way he wants it. His actions will be interpreted by another, and his own identity will be challenged by another's actions and attitudes. Robert, too, perceives the isolation which is such a fundamental part of betrayal. When he asks Emma if she received the letter waiting for her in Venice, he observes, "We could be, and in fact are vastly more likely to be, total strangers"; after a pause, he reflects,

> That's what stopped me taking it, by the way, and bringing it to you, the thought that I could very easily be a total stranger.
> *pause*
> What they of course did not know, and had no way of knowing, was that I am your husband.
>
> [p. 80]

The doubt that he has concerning his relationship to his wife immediately destroys the sense of security he had and imposes a sense of isolation on him. Love, as a generator of security, is a familiar ideal examined in these plays, as it was in earlier ones, for it is a condition whose changeable nature is not necessarily understood by the characters. They attempt to impose their own longings for permanence and irrefutability onto a state which is, at best, a tenuous balance between selfishness and selflessness. The modern playwrights discussed in the previous chapters also describe the destruction of such an expectation of security and

permanence in order to show how relationships dissolve because of overbearing selfishness or excessive selflessness.

We learn of the doubt between husband and wife after the initial scene, where Emma establishes that "It's all over" (p. 30), meaning that her marriage is finished, but also implying that Robert and Jerry's friendship is over. Even here, though, she does not realize that Robert and Jerry's love for and trust of each other is also destroyed. The irony of such a revelation, at the beginning of the play, is that "It" has been over for quite a while, as the later scenes show, and so it is here that we see Pinter manipulating the time scheme of the play to great advantage. Action is underplayed by the modifications in the sequence of events; the consequences of actions are more important than either the actions themselves or their causes. Thus when we learn that Emma has told Robert of her affair with Jerry four years previously, we discover yet another sort of betrayal, another implication of deception which has special application to the two men in the play. Jerry expected that his affair with Emma could go unrecognized and never expected that his friend knew what was going on:

> Robert: I thought you knew.
> Jerry: Knew what?
> Robert: That I knew. That I've known for years. I though you knew that.
> Jerry: You thought I knew?
> Robert: She said you didn't. But I didn't believe that.
>
> [p. 88]

The destruction of their trust for one another is shown in the absence of the squash games that they used to play together; this game typifies the exclusiveness which both men seek to make a part of their relationship ("... a game of squash isn't simply a game of squash, it's rather more than that. You see, first there's the game. And then there's the shower. And then there's the pint" (p. 69)). In revealing Robert's subtle disassociation from Jerry, Pinter shows how initial misunderstanding produces and feeds betrayal, for betrayal is a condition which is curiously self-imposed in a way. Jerry thinks that his actions can go unnoticed, whereas Robert assumes that he knows the full cause of his friend's actions. Robert, after all, has also been betraying his wife, a situation which Pinter uses to show how self-delusion also feeds betrayal:

> Jerry: ...you betrayed her for years, didn't you?
> Robert: Oh yes.
> Jerry: And she never knew about it. Did she?
> Robert: Didn't she?
> *pause*
> Jerry: I didn't.
> Robert: No, you didn't know very much about anything, really, did you?
>
> (p. 42)

Pinter seems to argue that betrayal cannot exist independently of self-delusion, both on the part of the initiator and on the part of the victim of the betrayal. Jerry betrays his wife and friend, but his self-delusion makes him unaware of the course of this betrayal, unaware of the complications of his actions on others, other actions on his. Such a situation is rather like those found in Pirandello, in that each character is working through his own interpretations of events only to find that the interpretations that he must recognize have been imposed on him by someone else. At the end, the character has played the fool and has achieved nothing that he wants.

As Pinter's play proceeds, and time moves nearly chronologically backwards, we come to understand that the real betrayal in this play is not that between husband and wife, but that between man and man. Jerry and Emma's affair is juxtaposed with the love that the two men have for each other, for both types of relationships tend to destroy one another. Each affair is misunderstood by its participants, for their intentions continually conflict with one another. The terms of their interaction are confused from the beginning, as Pinter describes in the last scene of the play: the beginning of Emma and Jerry's affair. Emma tells Jerry that he is her husband's best man, his friend's best man, and he merely replies, "No. Your best man" (p. 135). His love for Robert has been transposed to Emma. When Robert enters the room, Jerry testifies that Emma is beautiful, justifying his opinion by saying that he speaks as "your oldest friend. Your best man." Robert merely replies, "You are, actually" (p. 138). It is on this term of friendship that the whole play revolves, for the play serves to redefine the nature of betrayal to reveal the real identity of those who are most betrayed. As mentioned above, we learn, little by little, that the two men are betrayed by their actions and their intentions. Thus, as in Chekhov

and Pirandello, we recognise that man cannot function independently of others' expectations of him, for there will always be a disparity between those attitudes that a character has about his own life and those which others have about him. Other playwrights have shown this disparity by emphasising man's isolation from understanding, even his isolation from self; in this play, Pinter merely establishes such isolation through his manipulation of the time scheme, an act which undermines individual initiative as well, as Beckett also shows.

The irrevocability in Pinter's time scheme also emphasises a character's inability to change either himself or others, since circumstances must be accepted for what they are. As we have seen, characters can have the desire to believe that some circumstances are permanent--those situations which they perceive as beneficial to them--though their desires and those of others conflict. Individuals complicate others' lives and frustrate others' expectations even as they frustrate their own. Stoppard elaborates upon these themes in The Real Thing, a play which also examines man's fundamental isolation and his yearning to overcome such isolation. Stoppard, especially, points out the irony of both wishing to overcome isolation and demanding that one's self-identity be respected and appeased. However, instead of altering the sequence of time, as Pinter does, Stoppard contrasts the medium of the theatre with the supposed reality of everyday life: his play-within-a-play reflects upon the standards which govern the lives of the characters in the main body of the play, and so the drama appears to be self-reflective. In the interior play, for example, Charlotte tells Max that he is overreacting to her affair; infidelity is something to be accepted, for one cannot change others. Like Ibsen, Stoppard argues that one cannot control others, for if we do not understand ourselves, we can never understand the quality of human relationships. In the main play, Charlotte disparages Henry's play because it is not realistic, for she argues that in real life, one does not always have the words ready, and all the responses are not plotted out. Later on in this scene, when Henry corrects one of Max's mixed metaphors in an effort to redirect his displeasure with Brodie's character, Max agrees with Charlotte's criticisms; he tells Henry,

> There's something wrong with you.
> You've got something missing. You may have all the words, but having all the

> words is not what life's about.
> *****************
> That's what life's about--messy bits of good and bad luck, and people caring and not necessarily having all the answers.
>
> [TRT: p. 34][2]

Henry likes his play because it describes conditions which he would like to realize, for he is as reluctant to accept others' faults as he is reluctant to accept his own. Of course, any caring displayed by characters in modern drama, whether this caring be directed to lovers, friends, or children, is often separate from the acts of condoning actions, judging intentions, and even understanding the conflicts in others' lives. Thus Stoppard analyzes Henry's literary pretensions in an effort to elaborate upon Henry's misguided views of love, for the juxtaposition of art and life follows closely on both the analysis of literary standards and the standards of a relationship supposedly based on love and mutual respect. When Annie attacks Henry's disparagement of Brodie's play, what she says about Henry's literary pretensions is also true about the way that he lives his life: "You judge everything as though everyone starts off from the same place, aiming at the same prize....Shakespeare out in front by a mile, and the rest of the field strung out behind to close the gap" (p. 48).

Henry is not realistic about human nature, since he is not willing to compensate for the imperfections of others; his demands, although they are not rigidly imposed, are too restrictive, even for himself. Such rigidity is, as we have seen, very important in modern drama. It is interesting to note how Stoppard describes Henry's good intentions but reveals the futility of them, for in the world that he describes, trying to carry through with one's intentions is not enough. Our efforts are not always rewarded with favour or calm or peace or understanding. We may not know what it is that we do, but we do it anyway, without understanding but with an instinctual response. Henry loves with an exclusiveness which is instinctual, since he is struggling to preserve himself, and though it is commendable, it is also idealistic. He tells Annie, "I love having a lover and being one. The insularity of passion. I love it. I love the way it blurs the distinction between everyone who isn't one's lover. Only two kinds of presence in the world. There's you and there's them" (p. 48). He is not being practical, for there

is no insularity of the type that he speaks, or if there is, his own love will reflect that insularity as well. In other words, Henry has too much faith in something which does not always operate according to faith, but which changes and alters according to the fickleness of human nature. He expects an ideal, just as Hedda does, but life does not recognize ideals. Life cannot always recognize that knowledge--of the self, of others--that Henry seeks to attain, for his life incorporates that confused blending of dependence on others, resulting from a human being's unwillingness to exist in isolation, and the struggle for independence. Such a character fears isolation and struggles to negate it; love and fidelity are important to him, yet he will not allow himself to realize that making demands on others is ridiculous and self-defeating. Henry's commitment to Annie requires an understanding and accommodation which he is unwilling to accept in concrete terms, just as in his play, he avoids the realistic to emphasize the philosophical. He tells Debbie that his play is about "self-knowledge through pain." She says that it's about "did she have it off or didn't she," and then goes on to say that most people think that "all relationships hinge in the middle. Sex or no sex. What a fantastic range of possibilities. Like an on/off switch. Did she or didn't she. By Henry Ibsen. Why would you want to make it such a crisis?" (p. 61). Stoppard means us to ask ourselves if this is a crisis, for his play examines the possibilities for a human being to respond to the challenge of his expectations, just as it examines the possiblities for such expectations.

When Henry comes to doubt the fidelity in his marriage, he is pained by Annie's reluctance to admit that she had an affair, but his expectations are still polarized: fidelity, infidelity; all or nothing. Like a Hedda Gabler, a Marchbanks, a Henry IV, a Hamm, Henry is reluctant to accept that opportunities cannot always be given, or, if they are given, they cannot always be taken. He talks to Annie of this, noting his reliance on "the exclusive voracity of love. And then not. How strange that the way of things is not suspended to meet our special case. But it never is" (p. 69). He does go on to speak about the endless possibilites that one has in life and love, but he is only just beginning to understand that, even though man longs to be associated with someone else, he needs to recognize that self-knowledge is still primary. In some cases, as Pirandello, Williams, and O'Neill show, self-knowledge may be the only thing for which there

is hope. Self-knowledge and knowledge of others, therefore, are factors which are constantly at odds with one another. At the conclusion of the play, when Annie tells Henry, "I have to choose who I hurt and I choose you because I am yours" (p. 76), we see how Stoppard combines the ideas of dependence and self-initiative. Characters preserve themselves through their own actions and their control of others. Yet they cannot expect to take such control over others without having these expectations challenged, since control involves command and submission on the part of the one controlled.

Interrelationships are crucial to the examination of man's place in his world, since they confirm or destroy his expectations about the degree of control that he can have. All of these plays describe characters whose greatest concern is for self-preservation, and before we condemn such a concern for its selfishness, we ought to acknowledge the conflicts against which these characters must struggle. Whether the exterior world is hostile or indifferent to the individual, as in Brecht and O'Casey, or insubstantial, as in Brecht and Pinter, or even unimposing, as in the more psychological drama of Pirandello, Ibsen, and much of Chekhov, we see that the greatest enemy to self-preservation is the self, and so it is not surprising that playwrights stress self-delusion over deception. Even when a character is struggling to better the lives of loved ones, as Mother Courage attempts to better the lives of her children, a character's primary concern must be with helping himself. We need not speak of the relevancy or irrelevancy of purpose for such concerns, for we need only be aware that the playwrights justify action, since it is an effort to overcome conflict and affirm the self. Affirmation does not necessariliy involve change, however. Again, we come to emphasize the importance of isolation in this drama, the ignorance of characters who do not realize that any judgements which they make concerning others will also reflect upon themselves, the exclusivity which each character hopes for in his relationship to others but which cannot be achieved. For example, in speaking of the defeat of his architectural plans, David tells Sheila and Colin in Frayn's Benefactors that his defeat cannot be accredited to any one person, for "It was people. That's what wrecks all our plans--people" (Bene: p. 68),[3] yet Frayn, like others, questions the role of individual initiative in such situations. A character cannot exist in isolation from

others; duty to self should always be judged by the success of a character's duty to others.

It is significant that in Frayn's world, circumstances may alter, but people do not escape from the complications of their lives; in other words, the distinctions of these complications may change, and the self must accommodate such changes. The question, again, reaches back to the determination of the amount of influence that other characters have on the life of one character; does one help to keep a marriage together, does one help a struggling friend, does one help strangers who may not see the necessity of being helped? Colin, disturbed by David and Jane's attempts to help Sheila and to construct a housing centre in the Basutos, tells his friends, "You haven't grasped one basic general principle--that other people's lives are at least as complicated as your own. At least as dense and extraordinary. And just as unlike your life as your life is unlike theirs" (p.84). In a sense, such a comment defeats the whole nature of expectations, for the individual can no longer believe that he is of worth, of value to someone else. He is no longer supported in his opinion that his life is distinct from others. There is little hierarchy of complications and sufferings, for, as Colin goes on to say, "What we've done once we do again....We don't change. We never escape" (pp. 84,85). This observation also brings up the whole question of what is meaningless and futile, since David's projects for helping people are ultimately meaningless and futile; they are undertaken to satisfy his own desires. In this, both Colin and David are alike, in that they both relish the mechanism of work more than the ideas behind it. When Sheila observes to Jane that "it's no good asking people what they want, because they don't know what they want until they got it" (p. 54), Frayn shows us the extent of his characters' denigration of others, the extent of their self-interest. Certainly, such a statement, similar to those made by both Colin and David, is a judgement which one character imposes on another without realizing that such a judgement is also applicable to himself. Since all lives are equally complicated, it should be that David, Jane, Colin, and Sheila do not know what they want until they have got it. A statement such as theirs justifies action, but does not justify purpose, for if all lives are equally complicated, if people do not know what they want, then the very act of helping intensifies and increases the complications and changes. We are left to ponder, at the play's conclusion, whether or not there is such a thing as a benefactor, for

it seems as if all the characters long to be told what to do, even while they are telling others what to do.

The characters in this play, just like those in other plays we have examined, grow more aware of how equally complicated all lives are, how difficult it is to help others, help one's self, accept guidance and advice. They want to be told what to do, yet they do not always listen. They try to be benefactors for others but end up being benefactors for their own lives; it is significant that they fail in both attempts. In the plays of Ibsen through Beckett, Pinter, and contemporary dramatists, we recognize that such failure is not found in great crises, but in the very act of living. Benefactors destroy, rise, fall, change, and reshuffle positions, but the complications in and of individual lives do not change. After all, it is easier to perpetuate a concern for one's own welfare than to continue a concern for the welfare of others, if only because an individual man convinces himself that he is more in control of his own life than he is of others. Such a belief is illusory, as we have seen, and yet it is predominant. This predominance leads one to assume that there are indeed certain expectations which are necessary for human survival and happiness, certain expectations which are produced from the conflict of having to conduct one's own life among other lives. In Benefactors, David finally realizes that buildings could, in probability only, be easier to maintain than relationships. He tells Sheila that the people who will have to inhabit the buildings will hate him for designing such things. Sheila tells him that he will have a different opinion tomorrow, saying, "You know how one's feelings change."

> David: Yes. I suppose that's why I go on with the scheme. Because if I can get these two towers up that will be something fixed. Two pieces of space will have an outline. As long as those two buildings stand they'll stand in the same place, they'll stand in the same relationship to each other. They won't melt into different shapes. They won't move round each other in the night, or lean against each other for support, or turn their backs on each other, or knock each other down.
>
> [p. 57]

One's expectations are easier to maintain for one's self, but when one must interact with others, then conflict and defeat result. Whether one's expectations are concerned with love, life

goals, or work, the appreciation of defeat tends to be the same, even though it may be seen in a comic, absurd, or pitiful light. Try as we might to ascribe the causes of our frustrations and defeats to exterior forces, however, a source of the conflicts and crises in our lives may lie in ourselves. These contemporary dramatists, like their earlier counterparts, seem to assert that we who have the capacity to attain so much spend so many successive moments of our lives meeting with our defeated expectations, and fighting, all the while, against the futility which is always in danger of envelopingus.

Notes

Introduction

[1] Bernard Shaw, Man and Superman, in vol. III of The Complete Plays with Prefaces (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1963), 169.

Chapter 1: Henrik Ibsen

[1] Henrik Ibsen, "The Wild Duck: Commentary," in appendix II, vol. VI of The Oxford Ibsen, ed. and trans. James Walter McFarlane (London: OUP, 1960), 436.

[2] Henrik Ibsen, An Enemy of The People, in vol. VI of The Oxford Ibsen, ed. and trans. James Walter McFarlane (London: OUP, 1960), 68.

[3] Ibsen, "The Wild Duck: Commentary," 435.

[4] Henrik Ibsen, "Hedda Gabler: Commentary," in appendix II, vol. VII of The Oxford Ibsen, ed. James Walter McFarlane, trans. Jens Arup and McFarlane (London: OUP, 1966), 484.

[5] Henrik Ibsen, "A Doll's House: Commentary," in appendix II, vol. V of The Oxford Ibsen, ed. and trans. James Walter McFarlane (London: OUP, 1961), 455.

[6] Ibsen, "A Doll's House: Commentary," 436.

[7] Quotations from Ibsen's plays are cited in the text using the following abbreviations; when lines can be sufficiently located by page number alone, no abbreviations are used in the citation:

ADH:	A Doll's House, in vol. V of The Oxford Ibsen, ed. and trans. James Walter McFarlane (London: OUP, 1961).
G:	Ghosts, in vol. V of The Oxford Ibsen, ed. and trans. James Walter McFarlane (London: OUP, 1961).
HG:	Hedda Gabler, in vol. VII of The Oxford Ibsen, ed. James Walter McFarlane, trans. Jens Arup and McFarlane (London: OUP, 1966).
TWD:	The Wild Duck, in vol. VI of The Oxford Ibsen, ed. and trans. James Walter McFarlane (London: OUP, 1960).

[8] Henrik Ibsen, "Ghosts: Commentary," in appendix III, vol. V of The Oxford Ibsen, ed. and trans. James Walter McFarlane (London: OUP, 1961), 469.

[9] Ibsen, "Ghosts: Commentary," 467.

[10] Ibsen, "Ghosts: Commentary," 468.

[11] Ibsen, "The Wild Duck: Commentary," 481.

[12] Ibsen, "The Wild Duck: Commentary," 481.

[13] Ibsen, "The Wild Duck: Commentary," 489.

[14] Ibsen, "The Wild Duck: Commentary," 481.

[15] Ibsen, "Hedda Gabler: Commentary," 500.

[16] Ibsen, "Hedda Gabler: Commentary," 478.

[17] Ibsen, "Hedda Gabler: Commentary," 493.

[18] Ibsen, "Hedda Gabler: Commentary," 490.

[19] Ibsen, "Hedda Gabler: Commentary," 476.

[20] Ibsen, "Hedda Gabler: Commentary," 484.

[21] Ibsen, "Hedda Gabler: Commentary," 487.

Chapter 2: Anton Chekhov

[1] Quotations from Chekhov's plays are cited in the text using the following abbreviations: when lines can be sufficiently located by page number alone, no abbreviations are used in the citation:

TCO:	The Cherry Orchard, in vol. III of The Oxford Chekhov, ed. and trans. Ronald Hingley (London: OUP, 1964).
TSG:	The Seagull, in vol. II of The Oxford Chekhov, ed. and trans. Ronald Hingley (London: OUP, 1967).
TTS:	The Three Sisters, in vol. III of The Oxford Chekhov, ed. and trans. Ronald Hingley (London: OUP, 1964).
UV:	Uncle Vanya, in vol. III of The Oxford Chekhov, ed. and trans. Ronald Hingley (London: OUP, 1964).

[2] Anton Chekhov, Appendix II: "The Seagull," in vol. II of The Oxford Chekhov, ed. and trans. Ronald Hingley (London: OUP, 1967), 384.

[3] Anton Chekhov, Appendix II: "Uncle Vanya," in vol. III of The Oxford Chekhov, ed. and trans. Ronald Hingley (London: OUP, 1964), 302.

[4] Anton Chekhov, Appendix III: "The Three Sisters," in vol. III of The Oxford Chekhov, ed. and trans. Ronald Hingley (London: OUP, 1967), 313.

[5] Anton Chekhov, Appendix IV: "The Cherry Orchard," in vol. III of The Oxford Chekhov, ed. and trans. Ronald Hingley (London: OUP, 1964), 317.

Chapter 3: Bernard Shaw

[1] Quotations from Bernard Shaw's plays are cited in the text using the following abbreviations; when lines can be sufficiently located by page number alone, no abbreviations are used in the citation:

C: Candida, in vol. III of The Complete Plays with Prefaces (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1963).

HBH: Heartbreak House, in vol. I of The Complete Plays with Prefaces (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1963).

MandSM: Man and Superman, in vol. III of The Complete Plays with Prefaces (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1963).

Chapter 4: Brecht, O'Casey and Stoppard

[1] Bertolt Brecht, "Mother Courage: Notes and Variants," in vol. 5 of The Collected Plays, eds. Ralph Manheim and John Willet (New York: Vintage, 1972), 389.

[2] Quotations from Brecht's plays are cited in the text using the following abbreviations; when lines can be sufficiently located by page number alone, no abbreviations are used in the citation:

MCandHC: Mother Courage and her Children, in vol. 5 of The Collected Plays, eds. Ralph Manheim and John Willet, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York Vintage, 1972).

TGW: The Good Woman of Setzuan, in Two Plays by Bertolt Brecht, trans. Eric Bentley (New York Signet, 1963).

[3] Brecht, "Mother Courage: Notes and Variants," 365.

[4] Brecht, "Mother Courage: Notes and Variants," 389.

[5] Quotations from O'Casey's plays are cited in the text using the following abbreviations; when lines can be sufficiently located by page numbers alone, no abbreviations are used in the citation:

TSof G The Shadow of a Gunman, in Three Plays (1957; rpt. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981).

TPandTS: The Plough and the Stars, in Three Plays (1957; rpt. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981).

[6] Tom Stoppard, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead (1967; rpt. London: Faber and Faber, 1984).

Chapter 5: Pirandello, Williams and O'Neill

[1] Quotations from Pirandello's plays are cited in the text using the following abbreviations; when lines can be sufficiently located by page number alone, no abbreviations are used in the citation:

SC: Six Characters in Search of an Author, in Naked Masks, ed. and trans. Eric Bentley (New York: Dutton, 1952).

HIV: Henry IV, in Naked Masks, ed. and trans. Eric Bentley (New York: Dutton, 1952).

[2] Quotations from Williams's plays are cited in the text using the following abbreviations; when lines can be sufficiently located by page numbers alone, no abbreviations are used in the citation:

TGM: The Glass Menagerie, in vol. 1 of The Theatre of Tennessee Williams (New York: New Directions Books, 1971).

SND: A Streetcar Named Desire (New York Signet, 1947).

[3] All quotations from Eugene O'Neill's Long Day's Journey into Night (1956; rpt. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1976) will be cited in the text using the abbreviation LDJ; when lines can be located by page number alone, no abbreviations are used in the citation.

Chapter 6: Beckett and Pinter

[1] Quotations from Beckett's plays are cited in the text using the following abbreviations; when lines can be sufficiently located by page number alone, no abbreviations are used in the citation:

EG: Endgame (New York: Grove Press, 1958).

KLT: Krapp's Last Tape, in Krapp's Last Tape and Other Pieces (New York: Grove Press, 1957).

WforG: Waiting for Godot (New York: Grove Press, 1954).

[2] Quotations from Pinter's plays are cited in the text using the following abbreviations; when lines can be sufficiently locatd by page number alone, no abbreviations are used in the citation:

TCT: The Caretaker (New York: Grove Press, 1960).

NML: No Man's Land (London: Methuen, 1975).

Conclusion

[1] All quotations are from Harold Pinter's Betrayal (London Methuen, 1978) are cited in

the text using the abbreviation Bet; when lines can be sufficiently located by page number alone, no abbreviations are used in the citation.

[2] All quotations from Tom Stoppard's The Real Thing (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1984) are cited in the text using the abbreviation TRT; when lines can be sufficiently located by page number alone, no abbreviations are used in the text.

[3] All quotations from Michael Frayn's Benefactors (London Methuen, 1984) are cited in the text using the abbreviation Bene; when lines can be sufficiently located by page number alone, no abbreviations are used in the text.

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